









THOUGHTS

ON THE

LOVE OF CHRIST,

AS

MANIFESTED TO A LOST WORLD.

BY D. A. HARSHA.

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”—
EPH. III. 19.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his
life for his friends.”—JOHN XV. 13.

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TO MY
CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, RELATIVES AND ACQUAINTANCES,
AND TO ALL
WHO LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
IN SINCERITY,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
Is affectionately Inscribed by
THE AUTHOR.

In Exchange.

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PREFACE.

THIS work is not designed as a systematic treatise, but as a feeble essay on the great, the inexhaustible subject of the love of Christ, as manifested to a lost world.

It was composed during a long period of recovery from a chronic disease, which brought the author to the gates of death, and well nigh terminated his life.

In the present volume, the author has endeavored to notice a few ways in which Christ has manifested his great love to sinners.

His object in writing this work is to do good; and should this little volume be the means of leading any sinner to the blessed Jesus, or of kindling a single spark of divine love in his bosom, or even of refreshing the soul of any saint—of animating him on his way to glory—he will feel amply rewarded for the toil of writing it, when in a state of much physical inability; and most gratefully would he ascribe all the praise and glory to

God. He can bless the feeblest instrument; and, without his blessing, all our labors for good must be futile.

While the author would endeavor to lead others to the Lamb of God, to the bleeding Saviour, most humbly would he himself glory in the cross of Christ. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;" and ever does he hope to proclaim the love and set forth the praise of that blessed Redeemer, who left the regions of glory to live and die for sinners.

"Jesus! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend;
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Lord, my life, my way, my end,
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

Till then I would thy love proclaim,
With ev'ry fleeting breath;
And may the music of thy name
Refresh my soul in death."

D. A. H.

NORTH ARGYLE, N. Y.

May 1st, 1851.

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THOUGHTS

ON THE

LOVE OF CHRIST.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

God designed from eternity to create this world, and people it with intelligent beings. This design was put into execution in the beginning of time. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* He spake, and this earth, with all its multifarious occupants, started into being. It required nothing but his Almighty fiat to usher a world and its inhabitants into existence. Man was created in the image of God : hence he was a holy and happy being. Uncontaminated by moral pollution, his soul was one of purity, holiness and happiness. He was

* Gen. i, 1.

lord of this lower creation, enjoying the smiles of his beneficent Creator, and the delight of the terrestrial paradise. Primeval beauty mantled all sublunary objects. Paradise bloomed with its richest productions; and all was peace and harmony between man and his Creator. At length man disobeyed the divine command; sinned against God, and fell from his original blessedness, by eating the forbidden fruit,

“ Whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.”

MILTON.

“ By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*

When we contrast man's present deplorable condition, with his pristine state of innocence, we may well exclaim with the Prophet, “How is the gold become dim! how is the most pure gold changed!”† “The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned.”‡

By his fall, man lost all communion with God, and became exposed to the miseries of

*Rom. v, 12. †Lam. iv, 1. ‡Lam. v, 16.

this life, to death itself, and to the wrath of God through eternity. From this sinful and lost condition he could not extricate himself; he could not redeem himself, nor pay unto God a sufficient ransom for his manifold transgressions. A broken law was to be fulfilled, the justice of God to be satisfied, and a complete atonement to be made for the sins of men, or else God and the sinner could never be reconciled.

Punishment, everlasting punishment and destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, awaited all mankind in the world of just retribution. All was forlorn; all was hopeless, forever hopeless with regard to man's redemption, had not God interposed on our behalf; to give unto us an expected end. It was the grand design of God, from all eternity, to exhibit a magnificent plan of salvation to a lost world.

And everlasting praise and thanksgiving be unto his most blessed name, that the glad tidings of this precious, unspeakably precious salvation have reached our ears.

When there was no eye to pity sinners,

nor arm to save them, God's eye pitied, and his arm alone brought salvation to them. In infinite love to lost and perishing sinners, he said, " Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."* To every redeemed sinner, God says, " When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, live. When I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine."† God did not leave all mankind to perish in their fallen, miserable and polluted condition. No! his love saved them; his wisdom devised a way by which we, polluted sinners, might be raised from the horrible pit into which our iniquities had consigned us.

" When in our blood we lay,
He would not let us die;
Because his love had fix'd a day,
To bring Salvation nigh."

*Job xxxiii, 24.

†Ez. xvi, 6, 8.

The glorious plan of man's salvation originated in the infinite love of God the Father; and in this divine plan of redemption, the most marvellous exhibition of the love of God to hell-deserving sinners is clearly seen. Here is love, the love of God: such love as could never have been conceived of, had it not been so amply revealed and manifested in the gift of his only begotten Son. "For God so loved the world (even a world of lost sinners) that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* "God is love," and our salvation is from the God of love, and is a salvation planned and executed in deep unfathomable love. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

When we contemplate the greatness of God's love to sinners, we are compelled to

* John iii, 16.

† 1 John iv, 9, 10.

pause, and exclaim with the admiring apostle, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" *

Oh! the riches of divine grace! Oh! the depths of divine love. How vast, how glorious, and how adequate to the wants of perishing sinners, is that plan of mercy—of love—of salvation, which God has devised to save a lost world! It manifests the wisdom, the justice, the power, but, above all, the love of God.

"Salvation! what a glorious plan;
How suited to our need!
The grace that raises fallen man
Is wonderful indeed!

'Twas wisdom form'd the vast design,
To ransom us when lost;
And love's unfathomable mine
Provided all the cost.

Truth, Wisdom, Justice, Pow'r and Love,
In all their glory shone,
When Jesus left the courts above,
And died to save his own."

NEWTON.

God has chosen a portion of the human family to be the monuments of his free grace — trophies of his redeeming love; and for them he has sent his own son to suffer and die.

In the profound depths of infinite love, the mercy of God to a lost world had its egress. Unsolicited and undeserved, it was nevertheless extended to lost sinners : sinners, guilty and polluted, are the objects upon which the mercy and love of God are profusely bestowed.

Love is God's darling attribute, which he delights to manifest most illustriously; for God is love.* And he has most singularly displayed all his love to sinful man, in the contrivance of his salvation.

Oh ! how immeasurably great was that love which saved a world from ruin, and raised millions of Adam's sons and daughters from eternal death and woe, to everlasting life and felicity ! Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

The promise of a Great Deliverer, who should emancipate captivated man from the

* 1 John iv, 8.

thralldom of sin and death, and accomplish his salvation, was early conveyed to our first parents. Before their expulsion from Paradise, when all seemed lost, a gleam of hope shone around them. It was promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent; that the works of the devil should be destroyed. For this purpose, the Son of God was to be manifested in the flesh.* To the patriarchs the same promise was more amply conveyed. Abraham got a glimpse of the day of Christ, and was glad. Dying Jacob spoke of the coming of a Saviour. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come."† Moses said to the children of Israel, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me : unto him ye shall hearken."‡

Isaiah, wrapped in prophetic vision, eloquently describes the advent and characteristics of the promised Messiah. "Unto us a child is born : unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder;

* 1 John iii, 8. † Gen. xlix, 10. ‡ Deut. xviii, 15.

and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

“Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”† All the prophets spoke of Him who was to come into the world to accomplish our salvation; “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”‡ As the time approached, the promises of a divine Saviour were multiplied. “But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”||

Love was the grand principle which prompted the blessed God to give his Son to die for sinners; and love was the impelling motive that brought Immanuel from his throne, to this fallen world, in order to save the lost. How great, how sublime was that scheme of his to save a perishing world! How vast was that love which enabled him to execute this plan!

* Is. ix, 6.

† Is. vii, 14.

‡ Rev. xix, 10.

|| Gal. iv, 4, 5.

CHAPTER II.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN COMING INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.

“ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.—1 *Tim.* xi, 15.

The gospel, as the name signifies, denotes glad tidings. This blessed gospel is sent to us : to you, reader, are these glad tidings conveyed. “ That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” is the best news that ever fell on the ears of a dying world. Life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel. Let us now contemplate the glorious character of our blessed Redeemer, and the love which he has manifested in coming into the world to save sinners.

1. In the person of Christ, the human and divine natures are united. His divinity is clearly asserted in the Scriptures. The Redeemer of lost sinners is the eternal Son of God—equal with the Father, the Creator of the universe, the upholder of all things. Indeed, with supreme power, he reigns uni-

versal Lord. All power is given to him, in heaven and earth. All worlds are his. All kingdoms are his domain. He made all things. At his command, worlds started into being. By his power all created matter is upheld in existence. He has caused the sun to shine with undiminished splendor on our globe for nearly six thousand years. It is he "that spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; that maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south."*

Open the blessed volume, and read the fundamental doctrine of christianity, that Christ, the redeemer of sinners, is God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made, that was made."† It is a matter of great consolation for the believer who has intrusted his immortal concerns in the hands of his blessed Redeemer, to know that he is God over all, blessed for ever. Let him ever bear in mind that the Saviour, who loves him, is the only begotten

* Job ix, 8, 9.

† John i, 1, 3.

son of God, and bears his very image. He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. He is clothed with divine majesty, and possesses all divine perfections, and infinite excellences. He is equal with God in all his glorious perfections.

He is called "the Lord of glory," the "King of glory," "The mighty God," "Jehovah;" and in the Revelation he is described as having on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." * Again, it is said of him that he "is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the

* Rev. xix, 16.

pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell.”*

There is a transcendent loveliness in Christ's person. He is “fairer than the children of men :” “the chiefest among ten thousand; yea, he is altogether lovely.” Oh! what glorious and lovely attractions centre in Immanuel! Such is the character of Him who came into our sin-polluted world, to shed on Calvary his precious blood for the redemption of his people.

2. Christ came into the world by being manifested in the flesh, yet he lost nothing of his essential glory and dominion. He was as truly “the brightness of his Father's glory,” and the owner of the universe, when in the manger, and on the cross, as he is now at the right hand of God: “Even the Son of man who is in heaven.” Yet out of love to sinners, he chose to suffer that glory to be veiled in humanity, and himself to be made under the law to redeem his people. Oh! what amazing love is seen here. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”† “God was manifest in the flesh.”‡ Christ

* Col. i, 15 - 19. † John i, 14. ‡ 1 Tim. iii, 16.

Jesus was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but he “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” * The advent of Christ was the signal of peace on earth. His incarnation was an event of great joy to the world. To the shepherds of Bethlehem, the glad tidings of his birth were conveyed by an angel of the Lord. To them he proclaimed : “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” † A new light then burst upon the world. The glorious Sun of Righteousness, emitting his resplendent rays upon kingdoms and nations involved in moral darkness, arose to enlighten, to gladden and to bless our benighted planet. The prince of peace made his appearance. The messenger of reconciliation came, to reconcile alienated man to the friendship of his offended Creator, and fit him for the mansions of glory. When such a momentous event had occurred, when the

* Phil. ii, 7.

† Luke ii, 10, 11.

eternal Son of God had invested himself with humanity, and become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; well might the song of the heavenly host resound among the hills of Judea, proclaiming, "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." For unto us a Saviour was born. And never was human nature so highly honored and exalted as when Christ assumed it. Oh! what blessings are bestowed upon fallen man, through the incarnation of the Son of God. Eternity alone can unfold them.

Christ came most willingly into the world to do the will of his heavenly Father. His words were "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God."* Christ offered himself a willing victim upon the altar of divine wrath. He came into the world. But oh! wonderful condescension and boundless love, that Christ should come into this sinful world. On the matchless condescension and kindness of Christ, as manifested by his incarnation, a pious writer † has the following beautiful

* Ps. xl, 7, 8.

† Thornton.

remarks: "Earthly princes are only feeble worms; their loftiest elevation is a molehill, and their brightest splendor a vain show. Yet how rarely do they descend from their thrones, to visit and relieve those who languish in the abodes of poverty and wretchedness! In our low and lost estate Jesus Christ not only saw and pitied us, but also hastened on the wings of love to bring salvation. 'He was eternally rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.' "

He was clothed with light, and surrounded with hosts of happy, adoring spirits; yet he submitted to put on our nature, and sojourn among guilty, worthless mortals.

Herein is love! love without a parallel, love that exceeds description, and passes knowledge!

The incarnation of the only begotten Son of God is a mystery of wisdom and love, in which all our thoughts ought to be absorbed, and all our hearts with it should be enraptured. The wonders of the vast universe, could they be collected and presented

to us in one view, would lose all their attraction and dwindle into insignificance, were we steadfastly to contemplate the marvellous condescension of the Redeemer, manifested in the humiliation to which he submitted on our account. When he exchanged his throne for the manger of Bethlehem, the shining host of heaven burst into that sublime song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to men." Here is condescension which we could not have believed possible, had it not been so clearly and amply revealed. The kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man, appeared with pre-eminent lustre in the whole of that great work which he undertook to perform for their salvation. Oh! how ardent was that love which brought the ever blessed Son of God from heaven to earth, that he might save sinners. Oh! what but infinite love could have induced him to come into the world—to be made sin for us—to bear our sins in his own body, that we might be reconciled to God, and be brought at last into

the everlasting mansions of glory, to be ever with the Lord.

Jesus Christ is love itself embodied in a human form : that form once appeared on our earth, and trod the thorny pathway from the manger to the cross, till it was seen to bleed, and groan, and die, on Calvary, for sinners as vile as we are. Reader! have you an interest in that great work which Christ, by coming into the world, has finished? Are you deeply interested in his atonement, and righteousness? Is his love shed abroad in your heart? Is he unspeakably precious to you? For, says the Apostle, "unto you therefore which believe, he is precious." Can you adopt the language of the poet, and sweetly sing,

Sweeter sounds than music knows,
Charm me in Immanuel's name :
All her hopes my spirit owes
To his birth, and cross, and shame.

When he came, the angels sung
'Glory be to God on high!'
Lord, unlose my stamm'ring tongue :
Who shall louder sing than I? — NEWTON.

By his coming into the world and accomplishing our salvation, Christ has opened the gates of the celestial city, through which redeemed sinners may now pass into mansions of eternal bliss. O sinner, the gates of Paradise are now wide open for your reception; enter in and be saved. The arms of Christ are now stretched from heaven for your relief. Look up, then, with confidence to your loving Saviour. He now calls upon you from his eternal throne, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else; a just God, and a Saviour."* Sinner, have you looked to Christ for salvation? In him you will find an everlasting salvation. Everlasting salvation! precious words! It is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. In the incarnation of the Son of God, we behold immeasurably great love manifested to sinners. With love unparelled, he descends to this sinful world, and lives and dies for the redemption of his people. Love led him to forsake the regions of glory, for this dark abode of sin and suffering.

* Is. xlv, 21, 22.

“Nothing brought him from above,
Nothing but redeeming love.”

O, what love is here manifested to a guilty, rebellious world! “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

But why did he thus veil his glory in humanity, and come into this world? It was to save sinners. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” *

3. To save sinners was the very object, for which Messiah left his throne; for which the Son of God became incarnate. “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” † “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” ‡ When Christ veiled his glory, and left the regions of bliss, it was to save sinners. When he assumed mortal flesh, and became a suffering man, it was to save sinners. When he bled and died on the cross, it was to save sinners. When he burst the fetters of death,

*1 Tim. i, 15. †Mat. ix, 13. ‡Luke xix, 10.

and in a glorified form ascended to heaven, it was to save sinners; and now that he is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, he is still carrying on his blessed work of saving sinners.

It was infinite love that brought Christ into the world to save sinners. What amazing love is here displayed! In man's redemption, the love of Christ shines with pre-eminent lustre. In his love, Christ came to save sinners, and most willingly does he receive even the vilest sinner that comes to him for salvation.

Reader, have you yet fled for refuge to the world's Redeemer? There is but one refuge provided for a lost world: Christ is that refuge. He shelters all that come to him. In him is eternal safety. Happy are they, whose hopes are fixed on him: they are safe; though all around them are changes and fluctuations, yet their rest is pitched aloft, far above this sphere of changing and perishing mortality. Onward and heavenward will be their course, and glorious will be their de-

stiny ! When Christ shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory.

Animated by the hope of immortality, look with holy contempt upon the world and all its delusive pleasures. Let a joyful eternity be ever in your view. Choose Christ as your Saviour and portion, and heaven will be your home. You will quickly glide over the tempestuous sea of life, and land on

—— “ the peaceful shore
Of blest eternity.”

Come, O sinner ! come and intrust your salvation to the blessed Jesus, who came to save sinners. He will not cast you out. Hear his own words : “ Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.”* He has a willing ear to hear your cry ; a willing heart to receive you ; willing arms to embrace you ; almighty power to save you. O do not refuse the Lord of glory ! Do not condemn the gospel message of love.

Behold your loving Saviour ! See what an interest he has taken in your eternal welfare. See him laying aside the robes of his

* John vi, 37.

glory for you. See him, though high, becoming low, though rich, becoming poor for you; and see him coming into this world to save you. Attend to his gracious calls. Seek him instantly. May the sweet influences of Christ's redeeming love constrain you to come and partake of the joys of salvation. Salvation by Christ! Blessed gospel; well mayest thou be styled glad tidings of great joy!

In a word, I beseech you, dear reader, as you value the happiness of your immortal soul and the bliss of eternity, to make sure of your salvation. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." To-morrow may be too late. To-morrow's sun may set upon your grave. Now "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."*

* Is. lv, 6, 7.

“ Come, lepers, seize the present hour,
The Saviour's grace to prove :
He can relieve, for he has pow'r ;
He will, for he is love.”—NEWTON.

CHAPTER III.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST, AS MANIFESTED IN HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”—JOHN XV, 13.

“Religion! thou the soul of happiness;
And groaning Calvary, of thee! There shine
The noblest truths; there strongest motives sting;
There sacred violence assaults the soul;
There nothing but compulsion is forborne.

————— Thou my all!

My theme! my inspiration, and my crown!
My strength in age! my rise in low estate!
My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth; my world!
My light in darkness, and my life in death!
My boast through time! bliss through eternity!
Eternity too short to speak thy praise,
Or fathom thy profound of love to man!
To man of men the meanest, ev'n to me!
My sacrifice! my God! What things are these?
Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love!
Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
The grand morality is love to thee!”

In the death of Christ, we behold the most astonishing exhibition of divine love that has ever been manifested to a lost world.

Such love as is here displayed is without a precedent—without a parallel in the annals of time or in the records of eternity. To behold the Son of God, the Maker of worlds, bowing his head on the cross, and yielding up his immaculate soul amid the agonies of death, is the most wonderful, the most affecting, the most melting sight that mortals ever witnessed. Around the cross of Christ there shine the most resplendent rays of divine love that ever beamed from the Sun of Righteousness—that ever emanated from the Deity.

Here then is the brightest display of love, that Christ has manifested to a world of perishing sinners. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”* But, oh ! amazing love ! that Christ breathed out his precious life, poured out his holy soul unto death, for his enemies, for the ungodly, for sinners. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare

* John xv, 13.

to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Christ died to save sinners : without his death, their salvation could not have been accomplished. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission;† and without the shedding of Christ’s precious blood, not a single sinner could have been saved. The salvation of countless millions was suspended on the death of Christ; but, in love, he died to save them.

Here we may behold a little of the vastness of that love which cannot be measured, which cannot be told. The Saviour’s love met death itself in the face, and triumphed over the grave. O, my soul, look and wonder ! Behold thy Saviour bleeding on the cross; bleeding from every pore, that thy sins might be washed away in the flowing stream ! See him pouring out his soul unto death, for thy salvation; and ask, Is not this a manifestation of unparalleled love to thee?

O, blessed Jesus ! we come far short of comprehending the greatness of thy dying love. It is a great deep. It is a fathomless

* Rom. v, 6 - 8.

† Heb. ix, 22.

ocean. O, may we contemplate more and more this mystery of divine love !

Christ's suffering and dying for us is a great mystery, a mystery of unfathomable love. Oh ! how vehement was the love of Christ, that led him to endure death in its most terrible form, even the death of the cross. " Love is strong as death : the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters can not quench love ; neither can the floods drown it."* Such is the love of Christ. All the waters of affliction and suffering ; all the billows of divine wrath that rolled over our blessed Redeemer, were not sufficient to quench the ardency of that love which he felt for a dying world of sinners. It will endure through time. It will shine with undiminished splendor, and glow brighter and brighter through eternity.

Oh ! the infinite love of the Son of God, to shed his precious blood for sinners. The love of Christ, in dying for sinners, passeth all knowledge. It is immeasurable. It is as incomprehensible as the duration of eter-

* Cant. vii, 6, 7.

nity. It is as illimitable as boundless space. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."*

O love divine! where are thy limits? Great God! beyond the sight of mortals, and of angels! The stupendous sun, the brilliant moon, the amazing stars, the extended firmament; these have their bounds, but that love has none.

Lift up your eyes, and behold this vast world, the product of His power! See its continents, and its oceans extending for thousands of miles: these continents may be measured; but not his love, who, though God, became man, to die for man. Sooner would those unfathomable oceans be fathomed, than the depths of his compassion.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens! Survey the countless glories of the starry firmament; all its fixed or 'moving worlds of light!' Let your thoughts rove from star to star. How great is he who formed them all! How glorious he who has bid them shine with

* Job xi, 8, 9.

undiminished splendor through six thousand years, and to whom they are mean as a speck of flying dust ! Yet he who hung out those brilliant fires stooped from his amazing height of bliss and majesty, to assume mortal flesh, and appear a feeble infant and a suffering man. Far sooner should you measure their immeasurable distances, and count their countless numbers, than tell the vastness of his love, and the blessings it bestows. The sun is darkness, compared with His superior glory who hung it in the heavens; and yet he humbled himself to the dark abodes of misery and death for guilty man.

O! when you gaze upon the blue expanse, or when the solemn stilness of night banishes from your mind the thoughts of a vain, departing world; when you behold the midnight sky, and mark the thousands of its glowing fires; then think that he who fixed them there once hung on Calvary for you, that you might shine a star, a sun, in heaven, when all those stars shall shine no more. Think that he was once mean and dishonored, stained with blood, and blue with blows,

that you might have a treasure greater than a thousand worlds united, and infinitely more lasting than the countless lights which illuminate the firmament. Amazing love ! *

Here we must pause, and wonder, and praise, and adore; and in the midst of our adoration, exclaim, Lord! what is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou shouldst thus visit him? O blessed Jesus! thou didst visit us in love — in great mercy. Thou didst bleed thy life's blood, that we might be washed from our sins in that blood of infinite virtue. Thou didst die, that we might live. Thou didst wear a crown of thorns, that we might wear a crown of glory, and shine as stars in heaven forever.

O, to know more and more about the dying love of the Lord Jesus! The heart of Jesus is nothing but a heart of love : love to sinners, even the chief. It has been well remarked, that “were all the love of all the men that ever were or shall be on the earth, and all the love of all the angels in heaven, united in one heart, it would be a cold heart to that which was pierced with the soldier's

pear.”* O thou loving, bleeding Lamb of God ! come, wash us in that blood which flowed from thy wounded heart, from thy pierced side ; which streamed from Calvary, a fountain of overflowing, inexhaustible depths of redeeming blood. “ In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”† Blessed be God ! that fountain has been opened these eighteen hundred years, and is as inexhaustible as ever.

“ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”‡ Oh ! what stupendous love has Christ here manifested, in washing away the sins of a lost multitude in his own most precious blood. Well may redeemed sinners shout in songs of praise to their adorable Redeemer, “ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ;

* Maclaurin.

† Zech. xiii, 1.

‡ Is. lv, 1.

unto him be glory and domnion for ever and ever. Amen.”

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”

Oh ! the infinite efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.”* Through the blood of Christ, pardon and peace flow to guilty sinners. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”† “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.”‡ “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”|| “He made peace through the blood of his cross.”§ Precious blood that redeems us from eternal misery, and brings us nigh to God ! “Now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”¶ Oh ! costly price of man’s redemption — the precious blood of Christ. “Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ; but

* 1 John i, 7. † 1 Cor. xv, 3. § Col. i, 20.

† Eph. i, 7. || Acts xiii, 38. ¶ Eph. ii, 13.

with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

“For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”† O, my soul! look with astonishment at the price paid for thy redemption — the infinitely precious blood of Christ.

Dear reader, look and live! Look at the blessed Jesus, bleeding and dying on the cross for your sins. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”‡

“Upon the cross I see him bleed,
And by the sight from guilt am freed :
This sight destroys the life of sin,
And quickens heavenly life within.”

A bleeding Saviour, seen by faith, is the sight that gives peace to the guilty, heavy-laden soul. It is the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the conscience, that makes peace between God and the sinner.

But what intense sufferings our divine

* 1 Pet. i, 18, 19. † 1 Cor. vi, 20. ‡ John iii, 14, 15.

Redeemer endured, when he “ bore our sins in his own body;” when he was made to be sin for us; when he suffered, the just for the unjust. As our substitute, he endured the wrath of God, and suffered for our sins. It was infinite love that led the blessed Son of God to endure all these sufferings, and, at last to submit to the painful death of the cross. How brightly did this love shine in the last hours of his life, when he was about to bleed on Calvary! What but infinite love led him to the garden of Gethsemane, to endure that bitter agony; when he said, “ My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death,” * and where “ his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground!” † What but infinite love led him to the judgment hall, there to be derided, condemned to death, and crowned with thorns; where “ his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men!” ‡ What but infinite love brought him to Calvary’s mount, there to hang a suffering, bleeding victim on the cross, for our sins?

* Mark xiv, 34. † Luke xxii, 44. ‡ Isa. lii, 14.

There is nothing that shows the love of Christ like Calvary. It is there that all the rays of divine love are blended together. In that dark hour in which our Saviour hung on the cross, he showed to the world that his love was stronger than death: then he exhibited more than human love; he manifested the infinite love of God. Amidst all his sufferings, divine love shone with the greatest lustre. Oh! who can tell what love Christ felt for a lost world when he suffered on the cross? Then he was about to accomplish our salvation; and his love became stronger and stronger. Though he grappled with the powers of darkness, yet his arm brought salvation. He endured the hidings of his Father's countenance, till he was led to exclaim, in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But he made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; and amidst the last struggles of his holy soul, there fell from his lips in dying accents, these most blessed words—the most joyful ever conveyed to a sinner's ear, "It is finished!" Yes, your

salvation, sinner, is accomplished by this wondrous death — by that divine personage who endured it.

O, look at this exhibition of love! Was there ever such love manifested to a lost world, as is here displayed before your eyes? Reader, contemplate Christ crucified.

How intently was the mind of the great apostle fixed on this prolific theme! His language to the Corinthians is, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.”* You also may look towards Calvary, and with the same apostle, exclaim, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”† O, blessed Jesus! we cannot comprehend the vastness of thy dying love.

“The propitiatory death of Christ,” says a late pious writer,‡ “viewed by faith, fills and absorbs the mind, touches and melts the heart, raises and refines the affections, and completely transforms the whole character.”

* 1 Cor. ii, 2.

† Gal. vi, 14.

‡ Thornton.

“Herein is love,” says John; “not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” “For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”*

Is it surprising, then, that Christ should be precious to believers? Can we see his matchless condescension, in stooping from a throne of glory, to a cross of suffering and shame; can we understand the great end of his amazing humiliation and vicarious death; can we feel the sprinkling of his peace-speaking blood upon the conscience, and not love, adore, and magnify him? ‘O ye cold-hearted, frozen formalists! on such a theme it is impious to be calm. Passion is reason, transport is temper, here.’ What can elevate and rejoice the soul, if it be unaffected with the highest manifestations of eternal love? In the death of Christ, the power, wisdom, justice, and mercy of God, shine

* 2 Cor. v, 14, 15.

forth in full unclouded splendor. What language can, with due force, express the tender and lively emotions which spring up in the christian's breast as he silently muses on the delightful subject of redeeming love? O God! what is man, that thou art mindful of him? Thou didst not even spare thine own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all. Who am I, that such a price should be paid for my ransom? It was not with silver and gold, and corruptible things, that my soul was redeemed, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Why, blessed and adorable Saviour, didst thou look in compassion on me, a worthless worm, a vile apostate, a hell-deserving rebel? O how is my soul lost in admiration and delight, when I contemplate this mystery! May thy love ever glow in my heart, and thy praise on my tongue! May I wholly live to thee, who hast died for me.

“ Oh, wond'rous love! to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame;
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead thy gracious name.”

The death of Christ delivers us from condemnation. When a sinner, by faith, obtains a sight of the crucified One, he boldly exclaims in the face of all his enemies, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." By his death he has satisfied divine justice, and reconciled us to God; and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."* "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."† O, to have an interest in that atonement which Christ made for our sins! "By whom we have now received the atonement."‡

Reader, I would not lead you to Sinai, but to Calvary — to the Saviour's bleeding side. I would point you to the cross of Christ; to Him, who, in his great love, once suffered, and bled, and died for sinners. I would direct you to the bleeding Lamb of God, "which taketh away the sin of the world." May

* Rom. viii, 1. † Rom. v, 1, 9, 10. ‡ Rom. v, 11.

you behold Him with the eye of faith; even Him who so loved you, that he laid down his own life for you. Then shall "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," fill your heart. Then shall heavenly joys possess your renewed spirit; and one unbroken strain of praise shall, through time and eternity, arise from your purified, exalted, and enraptured soul, to Him that loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood.

Look at Jesus now. Have faith in his atoning blood. Endeavor to obtain a glimpse of the bleeding Saviour.

"A bleeding Saviour seen by faith,
A sense of pard'ning love;
A hope that triumphs over death,
Give joys like those above.

To take a glimpse within the vail;
To know that God is mine;
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable! divine!" — NEWTON.

The sufferings and death of the Son of God afford the most illustrious exhibition of divine love that has ever been displayed on this terrestrial globe. Here is exhibited love, such as never before shone on earth;

love, surpassing human thought and comprehension. Truly, here the love of Christ passeth knowledge! Oh! what wonderful love and condescension are here manifested. Christ dying for sinners! The Son of God nailed to the cross for sinners! The blood of Immanuel flowing from Calvary for sinners!

Our blessed Saviour, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”* O, wonderful love that made the only begotten Son of God lay down his life for sinners!

“That such a person as Christ,” says an old divine,† “so excellent, so innocent, should undergo death, and such a death as that of the cross, so disgraceful, so painful; that he should submit to such ignominy, and endure such agony, such tearing of his flesh, such pressure in his spirit, with such submission and patience, for strangers and

* Phil. ii, 6 - 8.

† Vince t.

enemies ! Here was love, stronger than death. Oh ! the height, oh ! the depth of this love ! There are such dimensions in this love of Christ, as the longest line of our most extended thoughts and imaginations can never be able to reach and measure."

What amazing love did Christ manifest, when he, who was the brightness of his Father's glory, exchanged that crown of glory which he wore in heaven, for a crown of thorns on earth, and bled, and died on the cross for guilty man !

Sinner, " Behold the Lamb of God ! " Contemplate your divine Redeemer, who has shed his precious blood to save your soul from eternal misery. In love he died to save you. O, then, contemplate this loving Saviour in his sufferings and death !

" Think how on the cross he hung,
Pierc'd with a thousand wounds !
Hark, from each, as with a tongue,
The voice of pardon sounds !
See, from all his bursting veins,
Blood of wond'rous virtue flow !
Shed to wash away thy stains,
And ransom thee from woe."—NEWTON.

Sinner, flee to Christ. He will receive you joyfully, and save you with an everlasting salvation. He will rejoice over you with great joy. He is a loving Saviour, and he loves to save sinners. He, "for the joy that was set before him" (the joy of saving sinners), "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is" now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."†

Come, now, and put your trust in this Saviour. Leave with him your immortal concerns. Intrust fearlessly your whole salvation to him. Think not that he will reject you, if you essay to cast your sin-burthened soul into his compassionate arms. His atonement is all-sufficient. He saves to the very uttermost. Despair not : only come and commit your soul to Christ, and salvation is yours.

There is an infinite efficacy in the precious blood of Christ, to cleanse you from all sin. Blessed be God ! that blood which washes

* Heb. xii, 2.

† Heb. vii, 25.

away the deepest stains, has been shed; and that atonement which expiates the greatest guilt, has been made. God now says to us, in language the most pathetic, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."*

In the contemplation of our salvation, well may we exclaim with the prophet, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it! Shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."†

Blessed Jesus! It is from thy death that we derive eternal life and blessedness. How should our hearts glow with love to thee, and sound with the high praises of our God! "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."‡

Reader, are you deeply interested in the

* Is. xliv, 22, † Is. xliv, 23, ‡ Is. lxi, 10.

atonement and righteousness of Christ? Then go forward in your pilgrimage journey with joy; leaning upon Jesus, the beloved of your soul. "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."* "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."† With their robes washed white in the blood of Immanuel — invested with his spotless, perfect righteousness, the saints shall at last be presented before God, a faultless church; and the redeeming love of Christ constituting their unending theme, shall engage their enlarged and exalted faculties, and employ their ransomed souls in holy meditations through the everlasting sabbath of eternity.

Sinner, resort forthwith to the fountain of the Redeemer's blood, while it is yet open. Come, without delay: "Wash, and be clean."

* Eph. v, 2.

† Eph. v, 25 - 27.

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth, say Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plung'd beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoic'd to see
That fountain in his day;
And here have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear, dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be sav'd, to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy pow'r to save;
When this poor lisping, stamm'ring tongue,
Lies silent in the grave.—COWPER.

* Rev. xxii, 17.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONTEMPLATED.

“And to know the love of Christ.”—EPHESIANS iii, 19.

On no other subject did the mind of the apostle Paul dwell with so much delight, as on that of the redeeming love of Christ. This was his favorite theme. It was his ardent desire to exhibit to a lost world the grace of the Lord Jesus, which had been so abundantly manifested to himself, once a great sinner. It was the love of Christ that sustained him amidst all his trials, and distresses, and persecutions, and enabled him to finish a glorious career.

Neither the threats of the Jews, nor the terror of the Romans, could separate him from the love of Christ, or in the least abate his zeal for spreading the news of salvation, and the wonders of redeeming love through a lost world.

Writing to the Romans, he boldly exclaims: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or dis-

tress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

The same apostle, writing to the Ephesians, desires and prays that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they being rooted and grounded in love, “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

Let us contemplate the love of Christ in all its extent, and in all its vastness. When did it commence? In the past eternity. The love of Christ to his people extends from

* Rom. viii, 35 – 39.

eternity. Though it was manifested in time, yet it existed from eternity. "Then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men."*

Christ says to each of his chosen ones, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee."†

Oh ! wonderful thought, everlasting love ! Who can comprehend the import of these words, everlasting love ? Christ loves us, and his love is everlasting. Yes, dear believer, Christ loved you before the world was created ; before you had an existence. From all eternity he thought upon your lost condition by nature ; and oh ! how willingly, how gladly, he left the throne of glory to bring salvation to you. His love never had a beginning. "This river of love began to flow before the world was; from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Christ's love to us is as old as the Father's

* Prov. viii, 30, 31.

† Jer. xxxi, 3.

love to the Son. This river of light began to stream from Jesus towards us, before the beams poured from the sun; before the rivers flowed to the ocean; before angel loved angel, or man loved man: before creatures were, Christ loved us. This is a great deep; who can fathom it? This love passeth knowledge.”*

The love of Christ will reach into eternity; will extend throughout its immeasurable ages: it has no end. This is the sweet declaration of Christ, with regard to his love, that “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”†

O, to be among that happy number, who will enjoy in heaven the eternal favor of Christ’s love, which will make eternity itself one joyous unclouded day of everlasting light and immortal felicity!

Blessed Jesus! Interest each of us in thy unchanging loving-kindness, which is better than life. O, let one ray of thy most won-

* M’Cheyne.

† Is. liv, 10.

derful love light on our benighted hearts: soften them by the manifestation of thy grace.

Of the vastness of the love of Christ, we can form no adequate conceptions; much less can we, by any power of the understanding, comprehend it. To use the emphatic language of an old divine,* “it is as if a child could take the globe of earth and sea in his two short arms.” The love of Christ is like a great ocean, whose depths are unfathomable. There is a height in this love, to which no human intelligence can soar; a depth which no created mind can penetrate.

In viewing the love of Christ, there lies a wide unbounded prospect before us. The mental vision wanders at liberty over this illimitable range. The love of Christ is circumscribed by no limits; it is bounded by no horizon: it is one vast expanse in which the soul may lose itself in wonder, delight, and admiration.

The pious M‘Cheyne, whom we have already quoted, has the following beautiful remarks on the love of Christ. “Paul says:

* Samuel Rutherford.

‘The love of Christ passeth knowledge.’ It is like the blue sky into which you may see clearly, but the real vastness of which you cannot measure. It is like the deep, deep sea, into whose bosom you can look a little way, but its depths are unfathomable. It has a breadth without a bound, length without end, height without top, and depth without bottom. If holy Paul said this, who was so deeply taught in divine things; who had been in the third heaven, and seen the glorified face of Jesus; how much more may we, poor and weak believers, look into that love, and say, It passeth knowledge!”

If we cannot comprehend the love of Christ; if we cannot fathom it, let us contemplate and admire it.

It was the love of Christ that led him to assume human nature, in order that he might suffer and die, and thus atone for the sins of his people: it was this love that induced him to leave the bosom of his Father, and the adoration of the angelic host, and to sojourn among guilty worthless mortals.

It was love that led him to exchange the throne of glory for the manger of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary. It was love that made his whole life, from the manger to the cross, one of grief and sorrow. Love made him "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Well might the blessed Jesus have exclaimed "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."* It was love that made him suffer and die for sinners. Yes, love led him to the gloomy garden of Gethsemane; love drew him to the judgment hall; love nailed him to the cross; and love enabled him to exclaim with his expiring breath, "It is finished."

"Greater love hath no man than this." The love of Christ is wonderful love: it is surpassing, boundless love. Reader, look at that amazing love which Christ has manifested to sinners; and may you be able to comprehend with all saints what is its breadth, and length, and depth, and height!

* Lam. i, 12.

When you intently contemplate that redeeming love which brought Christ from his throne, to live and suffer, and die for sinners, does not your breast heave with emotions of gratitude; does not your soul rise in adoration, and is it not lost in wonder, love, and praise?

Have you a heart so cold as not to be warmed by such unbounded love; a heart so hard as not to be softened by such grace as his here set before the eyes of a wondering world?

No feeble mortal can express the vastness of the love of Christ to sinners! It is a mystery which eternity itself will never fully unravel. "God only knows the love of God." We know that it is great love, and that it is manifested to sinners, but it is love too boundless for the most capacious mind to grasp. None can comprehend its vastness: none can measure its immensity; language fails to describe it; human thought cannot fathom it; time cannot disclose its depths; and vast eternity itself will roll away in its continual and delightful contemplation.

How transcendent is the love of Christ!
It passeth knowledge.

O my soul, art thou not lost in wonder and admiration when thou contemplest this divine love—the love of Jesus? And love so amazing, love so boundless as the love of Christ, should call forth all our loftiest strains of praise, and exercise our highest powers of mind in devout contemplations. It should be the constant theme of our meditation here, till we come to possess its full and eternal enjoyment in that world where all is love. And if we possess the love of Christ on earth, it will cheer our hearts, brighten our prospects, alleviate our sorrows, mitigate our afflictions, and emit a ray of hope that will enable us to “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” even in this vale of tears.

To be the object of Christ’s love is desirable, and it is a blessed attainment to know that you enjoy it; to say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by

the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” There is nothing so much calculated to drive from sin, or excite to good works, as one ray of the love of Christ darting into the sinner’s heart: this will more effectually melt it, than all the terrors of the law, or the thunders of Sinai.

The love of Christ fills the soul with immortal joys. There is nothing so reviving to the believer, as the sweet thought of Christ’s love to him.

There is no subject stored with such an exuberance of divine consolation, and heavenly joy, as that of redeeming love—the love of the Son of God to a lost world. Every other subject loses its lustre when contrasted with this sublime, soul-reviving theme; and nothing tends so effectually to expand, elevate, and purify the soul, as that faith “which worketh by love.” And what do we not owe to the love of Christ? All the comforts and happiness of life, and all the joys of a blissful eternity flow from this love.

You should meditate much upon the love of Christ; and may that love ever glow

* Gal. ii, 20.

within you, and be like a perpetual fire burning upon the altar of your heart. "The love of Christ is a subject too lofty for a seraph's harp. The soul, renewed by the spirit, is often incapable of expressing the sublime feelings which pass through the mind, when thinking on this glorious subject. The love of Christ conveys a joy to the believer's heart, which is unspeakable and full of glory. The tongue cannot express the delight of heart which arises from the manifestation of this love.

"The joy of harvest, the joy of the bridegroom on his wedding day; the joy of victory, and taking great spoils from the enemy; the joy of a poor man in finding great treasures; all these are not worthy to be compared with the joy and exultation of the believer's heart, on the manifestation of this love to his soul."*

O, what does the blessed Jesus deserve for such unbounded love to sinners! All our hearts should be devoted to his service, and all our affections should be placed upon him. We should love him, because he first loved

us. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."* O to be made like the adorable Redeemer, and to praise him throughout the countless ages of eternity, for the wonders of his redeeming love! May this be the desire of every reader; and may each be enabled to exclaim with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee!"†

"One there is, above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend :
His is love beyond a brother's;
Costly, free, and knows no end.
They who once his kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love!

Which of all our friends to save us,
Could or would have shed their blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled, in him to God;
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a friend in need."—NEWTON.

*1 Pet. i, 8. † Ps. lxxiii, 25.

CHAPTER V.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN THE BESTOWMENT OF
GRACE, IN THE GIFT OF HIS WORD, AND IN
THE INSTITUTION OF DIVINE ORDINANCES.

“The Lord will give grace.”—PSALM lxxxiv, 11.

“I have given them thy word.”—JOHN xvii, 14.

“He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”—EPH. iv. 11, 12.

“The Lord will give grace.”* But will he give grace to sinners? Yes, to great sinners. Paul was the chief of sinners, and yet to him was the grace of the Lord Jesus manifested. He asserts, concerning himself, that “The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”†

Oh! what surpassing, boundless love, has Christ manifested to sinners! And on millions of Adam’s lost and guilty race, who were once as vile as sin could make them, has he in his great love bestowed his boundless grace. It is his love that makes sin-

* Psalm lxxxiv, 11. † 1 Tim. i, 14.

ners saints, and distinguishes them from the rest of mankind; and every sinner that will enter heaven's gates, must first feel the constraining influence of this love. O, how sweet are the words, "By grace (without merit) ye are saved!" Here is an overflowing fountain of divine consolation for guilty sinners. What wonderful love is here manifested to us!

"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus."*

* Eph. ii, 4 - 7. "Most amazingly rich mercy! most astonishingly great love! When dead in sins, blinded by pride to our wretchedness, and full of enmity against God and goodness, even then he loved us with great love, and of rich mercy quickened us. O look at, live, and feed upon this rich mercy and great love. Oh! to grace what mighty debtors."—MASON.

This grace is greatly celebrated by prophets, and apostles, and saints. Paul cries, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." The Psalmist exclaims, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." A good man says, "Nothing but free grace makes any difference between me and the vilest of sinners." One says, "I know no sweeter way to heaven, than through free grace and hard trials together; and where grace is, hard trials are seldom wanting." Another says, "Two things I chiefly know : one is, that I am a great sinner ; the other is, that Jesus Christ is a great Saviour. O the riches of divine grace!"

When Christ shall bring forth the headstone of his living, glorious temple, all the redeemed shall shout "Grace, grace, unto it."* Grace is glory begun, glory is grace perfected. Grace is the first degree of glory. The Lord will give grace and glory too. O what precious words! who can weigh their import?

* Zech. iv, 7.

“Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound!)
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved:
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed!

Thro’ many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come :
’Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures ;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the vail
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine ;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be for ever mine.”—NEWTON.

As soon as sinners are brought into a state of grace, they have need of continual spiritual instruction; and such instruction,

Christ in his love has afforded them. He has given them his word. He has favored them with the means of grace, and with the institution of divine ordinances. In the gift of his word, Christ has manifested great love to his people. Whilst journeying through this bleak, arid, wilderness world, to mansions of glory, he refreshes their souls with the bread of life, and with the living waters of salvation. The word of God, and the ordinances of his grace, afford them abundant provision by the way.

O, what transcendent love has the blessed Jesus manifested in giving us this unspeakably precious treasure, the holy Scriptures, in which are contained such inexhaustible stores of rich grace. The whole Bible is an epistle of love, unspeakable love, to perishing sinners. It unfolds the way of salvation; it proclaims a risen, glorified Saviour; it points to the Lamb of God; it is full of Christ, full of immortal love; it leads the sinner to glory. O then, may this precious treasure, this blessed volume be yours, be mine, to guide us through this dark, bewildering scene

of sin and sorrow, to a brighter world above. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

How highly has the word of God been prized by every christian pilgrim, by every traveller to Zion: it was David's comfort in his affliction; it was his song in the house of his pilgrimage. "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me." "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."†

How precious was the holy law of God, to this eminent saint, Israel's sacred bard! Hear him exclaim, "O, how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day." "Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart." "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." "Consider how I love thy precepts." "My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly."‡

* Psalm cxix, 105. † Psalm cxix, 50, 54. ‡ Psalm cxix.

Reader, may you also love the word of God, and may it ever be your greatest delight to read its sacred pages. You cannot prize this blessed book sufficiently. O, blessed Jesus, what do we not owe thee for the gift of this precious volume!

“Let everlasting thanks be thine,
For such a bright display,
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.

My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of him I love ;
Till glory breaks upon my view,
In brighter worlds above.”—COWPER.

In his love, Christ “has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.”* May you ever contemplate these “precious promises;” and may your prayer be, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” If you are a believer, you will love and value the word of God; you will meditate much on it. It is true of a righteous man, that “his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law

* 2 Peter i, 4.

doth he meditate day and night.”* On a dying bed, you will not regret having spent too much time in the study of the Scriptures, but you may lament that you had not devoted more of your time to the diligent perusal of the divine pages. When Salmasius, one of the most consummate scholars of his age, came to die, he exclaimed, “O ! I have lost a world of time ! time, the most precious thing in the world ! whereof had I but one year more, I would spend it reading David’s Psalms and Paul’s Epistles.” The immortal John Locke, when asked which was the surest way for a young man to attain a knowledge of the christian religion, replied, “ Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament : therein are contained the words of eternal life ; it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.”

It is from the bible that we obtain that knowledge, which will guide us to the abodes of immortality, which will lead us to glory and honor that will endure when sun

* Psalm i, 2.

and stars have lost their light. O, then study the word of God. "It embodies all," says an eloquent living writer, "that a christian in this pilgrimage can need: it is his only chart through this tempestuous life; in trouble, it is his consolation; in prosperity, his monitor; in difficulty, his guide; amid the darkness of death, and while descending into the shadowy valley, it is the day-star that illuminates his path, makes his dying eye bright with hope, and cheers his soul with the prospect of immortal glory."*

Always remember the divine admonition of our blessed Saviour, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."†

And "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."‡ Let the language of your heart ever be,

"May this blest volume ever lie
Close to my heart, and near mine eye;
Till life's last hour my soul engage,
And be my chosen heritage."

* Rev. Dr. Waterbury.

† John v, 39.

‡ Col, iii, 16.

In the institution of the ordinances of grace, Christ has manifested the tenderest love and concern for the spiritual welfare of his people while in this world. In his love, "he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ."*

A preached gospel is the gift of Christ—a gift of love to a lost world. The Redeemer's last command, was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."† This blessed gospel, Christ in his love has sent to us. The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage.‡

Blessed be God! that the glad tidings of life and salvation, through a crucified Redeemer, have reached our ears. O, happy they, whose lot is cast within the joyful sound of the glorious gospel! "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy

* Eph. iv, 11, 12.

| Mark xvi, 15.

‡ Psalm xvi, 6.

countenance.”* “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee.”† What a blessed privilege is it, that we enjoy, of entering into the house of God, with voices of joy and praise! Let us prize this privilege, and let us love to dwell in the house of God. How ardently did David love the sanctuary of God! “Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.”‡ “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.”§ To David, no spot on earth was so dear as Zion’s holy hill; no service so sweet as that of divine worship. Reader! how highly should you, who live amidst the meridian splendor of christianity, prize the means of grace which you enjoy! With the Psalmist may you exclaim from the heart, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in

* Psalm lxxxix, 15.

† Psalm lxxxiv, 4.

‡ Psalm xxvi, 8.

§ Psalm xxvii, 4.

the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”*

In the institution of the sacramental supper, Christ has afforded a grand exhibition of love. In his love, yea in his dying love, he instituted it. The Lord’s supper is the sweetest of all ordinances; it is, emphatically, a feast of love. The very banner that Christ unfurls over the head of every believing communicant, is love, love written in such legible characters that he who runs may read. “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”† With what joy does the redeemed sinner approach this sacred table, that he may commemorate the dying love of his blessed Saviour! His language is, “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”‡

This ordinance, exhibiting as it does a crucified Saviour, vividly displays the vastness of redeeming love and the riches of divine grace. A loving Saviour has spread this table for us, and he cries, “Eat, O

* Psalm lxxxiv, 1, 10.

† Cant. ii, 4.

‡ Cant. ii, 3.

friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”* Oh! what blessings are here provided for dying sinners; the bread of life, the waters of salvation, remission of sins; yea, an abundant pardon, peace with God, a meetness for heaven.

Reader, come and show your love to Christ, at this feast of love; remember, and obey his dying injunction, “This do in remembrance of me.” Can you lay any claim to the name of a christian, while you live in the utter neglect of this duty? Surely not. The love of Christ should constrain you to observe it. Surely it becomes a ransomed captive, a captive bought at such an inestimable price, to testify his obligations to his loving Redeemer! “Come, for all things are now ready.”† Come to the Lord’s table, and behold the most amazing love manifested to you, the infinite love of the dying Son of God!

O Blessed Jesus! may it be our delight, on earth to confess and own thee as our divine Redeemer before men, and to commemorate thy dying love in this sweet

* Cant. v, 1.

† Luke xiv, 17.

ordinance. Refreshed by that spiritual provision, which thou hast laid up for us in the gospel of thy grace, may we press onward in our pilgrimage journey heavenward; and at last, may we realize the joys of a blessed home in the world of glory.

Dear believer, we shall soon exchange the table below for the table above. Jesus, our dear Redeemer, himself shall be at the head of that table, and shall feed us, and lead us unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Till then, let us endeavor to be profited by all those means of grace, with which Christ in his love has favored us. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."*

* 2 Pet iii, 18.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN AFFLICTIONS.

“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”—HEB. xii, 6.

“Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.”—JOB v, 6, 7.

Affliction comes upon all. None are exempt from the sufferings incident to our fallen nature. The young, the old, the rich and the poor, alike feel the withering touch of affliction and of sorrow. Disease invades the strongest constitution, and affliction prostrates the mightiest energy. Often those in the prime and vigor of life are laid down on the bed of sickness, and made to feel that they are dying creatures. How true it is, that “man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble!” *

The children of God are not exempted from the afflictions of this life; but it is their blessed consolation to know that they have a Friend to sympathise with them in all their

* Job xiv, 1.

sorrows and sufferings, while in this mortal state. Yes, Jesus is that friend, who watches over their sick beds, and consoles their desponding spirits amid the frailty of sinking nature. Oh ! how often does the blessed Jesus wonderfully manifest his love to his afflicted ones ! How often does he whisper words of peace and love and consolation in their ears ! How often, on the manifestation of his love, do their souls overflow with joy, even when their bodies are racked with severe pain !

Christ will always make that promise good, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be;" and amidst all our trials and afflictions here, we may rely with unshaken confidence on the promises of our loving Redeemer, who will not forsake us in the hour of extremity. Then he will manifest his love to us, and display the riches of his grace. In all our trials, his promise runs thus : "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."*

All the afflictions of the children of God are designed for their good. They come

* 2 Cor. xii, 9.

from a kind heavenly Father, from a God of love; and one of their designs is, the purification and sanctification of believers. "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin."* "By this, therefore, shall all the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin."† "Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end."‡ "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried."||

Afflictions make us meet for glory : they enable us to obtain a correct view of the vanity of terrestrial happiness; they tend, through grace, to fix our souls on Him, in whom alone we can find true happiness and immortal joys. Happy sickness, that leads the soul to Jesus, the only source of blessedness !

Afflictions, then, promote our spiritual welfare, and are ordered for our good. It is expressly declared, "that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to

* Is. i, 25.

† Is. xxvii, 9.

‡ Dan. xi, 35.

|| Dan. xii, 10.

them who are the called according to his purpose;”* and afflictions are among the “all things” that are beneficial to the present and eternal welfare and happiness of God’s children. Afflicted believer, Christ says to you, “What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”† You will soon know the merciful design, which Christ had in afflicting you. In the light of eternity, you will look back and say that he has brought you by a way that is right.

In their afflictions here, Christ manifests most tender love to believers : he renews their fainting souls, by the manifestation of his love and the revelation of his grace; he strengthens them inwardly. “In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.”‡

It was the manifestation of the love and grace of the Lord Jesus, that supported the Apostle Paul amidst all his afflictions. “For which cause,” says he, “we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our

* Rom. viii, 28. † John xiii, 7. ‡ Ps. cxxxviii, 3.

light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

O, how greatly will our light afflictions and trials here, add to the weight of that crown of glory, which we shall wear hereafter! How will they sweeten that eternal rest which remaineth for the people of God, our happy home in heaven!

Were the sun of prosperity always to shine upon us, we would soon forget our Father's house; our heritage above. Christ sends us afflictions to tell us that this is not our rest, that our blessed home is far above this scene of perishing mortality. Here, we must be fitted for glory; and Christ says to his followers, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.”† It is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God. Of that happy throng who stand around the throne of the Eternal, it is said, “These

* 2 Cor. iv, 16 18.

† John xvi, 33.

are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

The way to Mount Zion lies through the valley of Baca. The road to glory is a rough one. Believers may exclaim with the Psalmist, “Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidest affliction upon our loins; thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.”† But when we come to that wealthy place, even to the heavenly Canaan, we will find that it will make amends for all our momentary afflictions on earth; that one hour with Christ in glory, will make us forget a life-time of suffering.

“Tho’ rough and thorny be the road,
It leads thee home, apace, to God:
Then count thy present trials small,
For heaven will make amends for all.”

Even now, when we are travelling through this vale of tears to mansions of

* Rev. vii, 14.

† Psalm lxvi, 10 - 12,

glory, we have our comforts and enjoyments. The love of Christ sweetens every affliction; turns the darkest night of adversity into the light of day, and the saddest night of weeping into the morning of joy. Come afflictions, come trials, come whatever may, we are assured that all things shall work together for our good.

Reader, are you afflicted? Is it sanctified to you? If so, look upon it as an evidence of Christ's love. Let it ever be remembered, that "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* And again, "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."† The Lord afflicts his people, because he loves them. "As many as I love," says Christ, "I rebuke and chasten."‡ He does it "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." And though now, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised

* Heb. xii, 6. † Prov. iii, 12.

‡ Rev. iii, 19.

thereby.”* Afflictions are often sent to arrest the wanderer in his course, and to bring him back to God. Many a child of God can say with David, who had often been tried and made to pass through the furnace of affliction, “Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes, I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”†

Afflictions are also designed for the conversion of sinners. Thousands have been chosen in the furnace of affliction. Oh ! how many saints of God, in every age, can witness to the truth of these words: “Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”‡ How many careless sinners, under the softening touch of affliction, have been brought to Jesus, and have found peace in his atoning blood ! How many, without the saving knowledge of Christ,

* Heb. xii, 10, 11. † Psalm cxix, 67, 71, 75.

‡ Is. xlviii, 10.

have been cast on beds of sickness, and there made, for the first time, to feel that Jesus is precious! Then they enjoyed his love, received his grace, and knew by experience that the Lord is gracious. Then affliction became light, Christ precious, and heaven sweet. The manifestation of a Saviour's love dispelled every gloom, and heavenly light broke in upon their souls.

In affliction, Christ manifests the tenderest love to his people, and then it is that they get a glimpse of his matchless perfections. He is always near them, and "in all their affliction he is afflicted, and the angel of his presence saves them."*

O, how happy are they to whom the love of Christ is manifested in affliction; in whose hearts the love of God is shed abroad; and who are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory! Such are enabled to say, with an experienced apostle, "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of

* Is. lxiii, 9.

God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*

A young lady who had lain on a bed of sickness for many months, once declared to the writer, that she would rather suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Whence arose this resignation to the will of God, amidst extreme sufferings? From the manifestation of Christ’s love; from that love being shed abroad in her heart.

“How often does Christ manifest his dearest love to his suffering ones,” said an eminent saint† of other days, during her sickness. “Blessed be God for all his mercies, and for this comfort in my affliction. O, how many mercies I have! I want for nothing. Hitherto I can say, the Lord is gracious. He has been very merciful to me, in sustaining me under all my trials. The Lord brings affliction, but it is not because he delights to afflict his children; it is at all times for our profit. I can say it has been good for me to be afflicted; it has enabled me to discern things, which, when I was in health,

* Rom. v, 3 - 5.

† Hannah Housman.

I could not perceive. It has made me know more of the vanity and emptiness of this world, and all its delusive pleasures : for at best they are but vanity."

Said an amiable and devoted young minister* in his last sickness, "I do not consider my circumstances melancholy or painful. I am very mercifully dealt with. My passage to the tomb is easy. I have comparatively little suffering, and I enjoy that peace of God which passeth all understanding. I can truly say, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, including these suffering days; and looking upwards to that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, I can also add, 'I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' " Thus afflictions work for our good, and qualify us for the joys and bliss of heaven.

And now, afflicted reader, remember the divine exhortation, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him."† "Happy

* Rev. Thomas Rawson Taylor, late of Bradford in Yorkshire.

† Heb. xii, 5.

is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.”* “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.”† Dear believer, the time is short. Your afflictions are nearly over.‡

“Be still, my soul, and know the Lord;
In meek submission wait his will,
His presence can true peace afford,
His power can shield from every ill.

* Job. v, 17 – 18.

† Heb. xii, 7, 8.

‡ “A few more trials; a few more tears; a few more days of darkness, and we shall be forever with the Lord. ‘In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened.’ All dark things shall yet be cleared up; all sufferings healed; all blanks supplied; and we shall find fullness of joy (not one drop wanting) in the smile and presence of our God. It is one of the laws of Christ’s kingdom. ‘We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.’ We must not reckon upon a smooth road to glory, but it will be a short one.”—McCHEYNE.

Thy path is strewed with piercing thorns;
Each step is gained by arduous fight,
Yet wait, till hope's bright morning dawns,
Till darkness changes into light.

Soon shall the painful conflict cease;
Soon shall the raging storm be o'er;
Soon shalt thou reach the realms of peace,
Where suffering shall be known no more.

There shall thy joy for ever flow
In one unbroken stream of bliss;
There shalt thou God the Saviour know,
And feel him thine as thou art his."

Cleave closely to Jesus; you shall soon see him as he is; then your afflictions, and trials, and days of mourning will have ended; you shall reign with Jesus, and be like him. The Lord having now "begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* Sanctified afflictions are fitting you for heaven. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked."†

* Phil. i, 6.

† Psalm xciv, 12, 13.

Reader, choose Christ now, and you may rest assured that goodness and mercy shall follow you through life, and glory and immortality crown you at death. You will enjoy the love of Christ in health, in sickness; and when you come to feel your last pain, and draw your last breath, you will shout forth, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

* 1 Cor. xv, 55, 57.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST, AS MANIFESTED TO HIS PEOPLE IN THE HOUR OF DEATH.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”—PSALM xxiii, 4.

“And when the closing scenes prevail,
When wealth, state, pleasure, all shall fail;
All that a foolish world admires,
Or passion craves or pride inspires;
At that important hour of need,
Jesus shall prove a friend indeed:
His hand shall smooth thy dying bed,
His arm sustain thy drooping head;
And when the painful struggle’s o’er,
And that vain thing, the world, no more —
He’ll bear his humble friend away,
To rapture and eternal day.”

Reader, it is a solemn truth that you and I must die. Death will soon overtake us. Before the termination of the present year; yea, before the sun shall have again passed the horizon, the hand that now writes these lines, and the eye that now reads them, may both have felt the chill of death.

Oh, what is human life ? A vapor ; a dream ; a tale that is soon told ; a feeble spark of vitality, emitting its light for one moment, and then forever extinguished ! “ Man that is born of a woman, is of few days : he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”* “ My days,” says Job, “ are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind ! ” †

Our continuance on earth is but for a short moment. “ Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.” ‡ “ As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth ; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.” || “ For what is your life ? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” § Oh, how short, how uncertain is life ; but how certain is death !

* Job xiv, 1, 2.

‡ 1 Chron. xxix, 15.

† Job vii, 6, 7.

|| Psalm ciii, 15, 16.

§ James iv, 14.

How true it is that God will bring us to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* “It is appointed unto men once to die.”† Millions have fallen before the irresistible stroke of death. All mankind are dying creatures, and are pressing onward to the grave.

Reflect upon the past history of mortality. “Generation after generation,” says a beautiful writer, “have passed away. Time was, when they were alive upon the earth, and active amid its busy scenes. They had their joys and their sorrows. They flitted across life’s busy stage, and disappeared forever behind the curtain of mortality. They have gone. The winds of centuries have swept over their graves.”

Reader, as it was with them, so it will soon be with us. Look at the future. It is computed that eight hundred millions constitute the population of our globe : these, in less than a century, will all be lodged in the grave. The grave receives alike as its victims the inmate of the cottage, and him who sits on his throne and sways the sceptre of

* Job xxx, 23.

† Heb. ix, 27.

nations. The paths of glory and honor lead but to the grave. Here come the nobles with their titles, kings with their crowns, and scholars with their volumes. Here is the home of the mighty hero, who once with his steel-clad millions thundered over the field of battle, and with an arm of power shook the foundations of kingdoms.

“How populous, how vital is the grave!
This is creation’s melancholy vault.”

O look at the brevity and vanity of human life, and learn a solemn lesson. Though you have soared in fame, or have accumulated wealth in abundance; though you glory in human power, and, like Alexander, could ride triumphantly over the ruins of desolated nations, yet the time will soon have arrived when the feeble tenement of clay shall moulder, leaving its only epitaph upon the crumbling marble; when it may be pronounced, over your mortal remains :

“How loved, how valued once, avails thee not;
To whom related, or by whom begot:
A heap of dust alone remains of thee;
’Tis all thou art, and all the great shall be.”

But death does not annihilate our existence. We are immortal beings. Human life is but a prelude to an immortal state of being. As we close our eyes on the visionary scenes of time, we open them amid the solemn realities of eternity; we enter upon that life which will never end. To die, then, is but to live.

Oh! how important is it that we should become interested in the atonement of Christ; that we may find redemption in his blood and forgiveness of sins, that we may die in peace.

All must tread along the dark valley. All must cross the Jordan of death. But the humble follower of Christ is, through grace, enabled to exclaim, as he approaches the dreadful precipice that hides the view of mortality: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."*

Christ's presence is with believers in the hour of death; he cheers their departing spirits. They have fled for refuge to him,

* Psalm xxiii, 4.

*Property of the Library,
of Congress!*

and he sustains them in their trying hour. Then he is a friend indeed; a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. This love is manifested to them: it enables them to shout forth triumphantly, in the face of the last enemy, "O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."* It is to the believer in Jesus, and to him alone, that death comes disarmed of his terrors; being only a faithful messenger to convey him to his dear Lord and Saviour: so that in the prospect of dissolution, he can express a desire with Paul, "To depart and be with Christ, which is far better."† He knows that Christ is his loving friend, that he is watching over his dying bed, ready to receive his departing spirit, and he can confidently say with Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;"‡ with David, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth;"§ "I

* 1 Cor. xv, 55 - 57.

† Phil. i, 23.

‡ Acts vii, 56.

§ Psalm xxxi, 5.

will behold thy face in righteousness: I will be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness;”* and with Simeon, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”†

Such is the peaceful end of the Christian’s mortal career. He dies in peace. He passes the swellings of Jordan, cheered by the Saviour’s presence, and animated by the manifestation of his love. It is in the trying hour of death, when flesh and heart fail, that the love of Christ is often amazingly manifested to believers.

It is when the swellings of Jordan come almost over the poor believer’s soul; when he is ready to sink beneath the boisterous waves, that Christ reveals to him his wonderful love, which fills his heart with joy; which enables him to shout forth joyfully upon his bed, and be more than a conqueror through Him that loved us.

“Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.”‡ “Pre-

* Psalm xvii, 15.

† Luke ii, 29, 30.

‡ Psalm cxlix, 5.

cious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." And at that solemn period, when the last sands of life are running out, when life's last hour is closing, he visits them individually, and unfolds the riches of his grace, and the wonders of his love.

He whispers in their ears his gracious promises. "Fear not ; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."*

And they find him faithful to his promises; yes, when they tread the verge of Jordan, they find him like the high priest of old, who bore the ark of the covenant, standing in the midst of the waters, that they may safely pass through its proud waves to the heavenly Canaan, that glorious land of promise—the happy home of believers, the heaven of eternal rest. "Then are they glad, because they be quiet; so he bringeth them

* Is. xliii, 1, 2.

unto their desired haven.”* Jesus Christ our blessed high priest, himself has passed through the Jordan of death. He has dipped his feet into this stream. He has rolled back its swelling waves. He has made a safe and easy passage for all his followers. Christian, why then are you afraid to die, to plunge into this stream, when you see the very footprints of your Saviour in the bottom?

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.”† His eyes have been closed in death. O, believer! Christ has been laid in the cold and silent grave before you. He has felt the chill of death. But he has removed its sting. Through death, he has destroyed him that had the power of it. Fear not, death is a vanquished foe. Christ says concerning his people, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death : O death ! I will be thy plague; O grave! I will be thy destruction.”‡ Christian, death can not hurt you. It is but a sure step into glory. Are

* Psalm cvii, 30.

† Rom. viii, 34.

‡ Hosea, xiii, 14.

you in bondage through the fear of death? Christ has delivered you from this bondage. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." * Thus, the children of God are safely conducted through death to mansions of glory, and awake amid the splendors of an immortal day. How happy they, who, when walking "through the valley of the shadow of death," find that Jesus is their friend and companion.

"How glorious he! how happy they,
In such a glorious friend!
Whose love secures them all the way,
And crowns them at the end."

Thus while the believer is standing on the verge of the grave, and looking back on his past life, his past conflicts, his earthly pilgrimage, he can exclaim in the language of

* Heb. ii, 14, 15.

the Apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;" and as he looks forward into a vast eternity, and sees the rich rewards that are shortly to be his, the kingdom that he is going to possess, the dazzling crown of glory that is soon to be placed upon his brow, he triumphantly adds, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." At last, he hears that happy approbation, and joyful invitation, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."*

The solemn scene closes. The dark valley is passed. Jordan is crossed. No more struggles. No more pain. No more tears of sorrow, and affliction. No more death. "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."† The believer is "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." In the Saviour's perfect love, he rests, and finds his

* Matth. xxv, 23.

† Is. xxv, 8.

eternity of joy. In his dying moments he could say, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me." "For this God is our God, for ever and ever; he will be our guide, even unto death." And he has experienced a happy realization of these promises. That Saviour who loved him in life, also manifests his love to him in the hour of death. His love is abiding, it is not subject to mutation; it knows no change. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."*

As the believer's mortal career is about to terminate, the Saviour stands by him, and encircles him with the arms of his love. He sheds abroad his love in the believer's heart. He sustains him amid the agonies of dissolving nature. He strengthens him by his grace. The dying Christian cries, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."† "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."‡

* John xiii, 1. † Ps. lxxiii, 26. ‡ 2 Cor. iv, 16,

Thus he finishes his earthly course with joy. His end is peace. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."* With him all is calm, and peaceful. The heavens are serene. The thunders of the law are hushed. Calvary is in his eye. Around him all is sprinkled with atoning blood. No wonder, then, that he should die in peace; for, "being justified by faith" he has "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." He has obtained the victory over death, the last enemy. Hence, many a dying Christian has been able to say, with Dr. Goodwin, "Is this dying? Is this the enemy that dismayed me so long, now appearing so harmless, and even pleasant?"

Not so with the end of the wicked. To him, death is terrible; the grave, gloomy; and eternity, dark. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death."† The death-bed of the Christian is a glorious, happy place. "The chamber where the good man meets his fate, Is privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life, Quite on the verge of heaven."

* Ps. xxxvii, 37.

† Prov. xiv, 32.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN THE HOUR OF DEATH (CONTINUED); THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

“Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.”—HEB. xii, 1.

A great many delightful records of the death-bed scenes of martyrs, ministers of Jesus Christ, and private christians, who have enjoyed the presence of Christ in a dying hour, who have felt his love manifested to them, and have received his consolations, might be adduced to corroborate the assertions we have already made, and to confirm the truth, that Christ does thus manifest his love to dying believers. We shall introduce the following:

1. Lambert, a martyr under Henry VIII, while he was cruelly mangled by the soldier’s halberts, and consuming in a slow fire, raised his burning hands amid the flames, and, with a distinct voice, exclaimed, “None but Christ; none but Christ!”

2. Lawrence Saunders, suffered martyrdom under the "bloody Queen Mary." He kissed the stake at which he was bound, and cried aloud, "Welcome the cross of Christ! Welcome the cross of Christ! Welcome life everlasting!"

3. John Knox, the Scottish Reformer's dying words, were, "Come, Lord Jesus, sweet Jesus! into thy hands I commend my spirit." Again he said, "I have tasted of the heavenly joys where presently I shall be! Now, for the last time, I commit soul, body, and spirit into his hands." Uttering a deep sigh, he said, "Now it is come!" His attendant desired him to give his friends a sign that he died in peace. On this he waved his hand, and uttering two deep sighs, he fell asleep in Jesus.

4. John Welch, the son-in-law of John Knox, was one of the most eminent ministers that the Church of Scotland ever produced. He died in great joy. On his death-bed, he seemed to feel himself on the very threshold of glory : he was filled and overpowered with the sensible manifestations of

God's love and glory. His last words were uttered in an ecstasy of joy : " It is enough, O Lord, it is now enough : hold thy hand; thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more! "

5. Samuel Rutherford, professor of divinity in the University of St. Andrew's, was one of the most resplendent lights that ever rose in Scotland. He died a triumphant death. In his last moments, he was favored with a most wonderful manifestation of Christ's love. He felt that Christ was with him, and that he manifested his grace to him; and he was, through that manifested love and grace, enabled to exclaim with his dying breath, " There is none like Christ. I feel, I feel, I believe, I joy, I rejoice, I feed on manna! My eyes shall see my Redeemer, and I shall be ever with him ! And what would you more? I have been a sinful man; but I stand at the best pass that ever a man did. Christ is mine, and I am his! Glory, glory to my Creator and Redeemer forever! Glory shines in Immanuel's land! O for arms to embrace him ! O for a well-tuned harp."

He continued exulting in God his Saviour to the last, as one in full vision of joy and glory. At length he entered into the joy of his Lord.

“In vain my fancy strives to paint
The moment after death;
The glories that surround the saints,
When yielding up their breath.

One gentle sigh their fetters breaks :
We scarce can say ‘They’re gone,’
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne.”

6. Rev. James Durham, on his dying bed, was at first in much darkness of mind. He said to a friend, “For all that I have preached and written, there is but one scripture that I can think of, or dare to lay hold of. Tell me, brother, if I may dare lay the weight of my salvation on it : ‘Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out?’ ” “That you may depend on,” said the minister in reply, “though you had a thousand salvations at hazard !” Having remained some time in silence, he at length came joyfully from beneath the dark cloud, and cried, in a rapture of joy, “Is not the Lord good?

Is he not infinitely good? See how he smiles! I do say it, and I do proclaim it!”

7. The noble Marquis of Argyle, on the morning of his execution, while settling his worldly business, was so overpowered by the manifestation of divine love and goodness, that he broke out in a holy rapture, and said, “I thought to have concealed the Lord’s goodness; but it will not do. I am now ordering my affairs; and God is sealing my charter to my heavenly inheritance, and is just now saying to me, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee!”

8. James Guthrie, a godly minister, the companion of the noble Argyle, exclaimed, when on the scaffold, “Jesus is my light and life, my righteousness, my strength and salvation, and all my desire! Him, O Him do I commend with all my soul unto you. Bless Him, O my soul, now and forever! Now, O Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

9. The pious Hervey closed his life in peace. His last words were : “How thankful am I for death ! It is the passage to the

Lord and Giver of eternal life. O welcome, welcome death! Thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of a christian : to live is Christ; to die, is gain ! Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" Then he fell asleep in Jesus. Oh, what a happy death; to die unto the Lord—to sleep in Jesus!

10. William Romaine was an eminent preacher of the gospel of Jesus, and died a joyful death. He had the love of Christ in his heart; and He was very precious to him in the hour of death. "I have," said he, "the peace of God in my conscience, and the love of God in my heart. Jesus is more precious than rubies; and all that can be desired on earth, is not to be compared to him." Being near his dissolution, he cried out, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! Glory be to thee on High, for such peace on earth, and good will to men." One time he said, "I have much of the presence of Jesus with me."

11. Rev. Dr. Doddridge, an eminent servant of Christ, said, on his deathbed, "I am

full of confidence : there is a hope set before me; I have fled; I still fly for refuge to that hope. In him I trust. In him I have strong consolation, and shall assuredly be accepted in the beloved of my soul."

12. The immortal Baxter closed his course full of joy and peace. To some ministers around him, he said, "I have peace, I have peace!" "You are now drawing near your long-desired home," said one. "I believe, I believe," was his reply. When the question was put to him, "How are you?" he promptly answered, "Almost well!" To a friend who entered the chamber, he said, "I thank you, I thank you for coming." Then fixing his eye on him, he added, "The Lord teach you how to die!" These were his last words.

13. John Janeway, a young minister of England, died one of the most triumphant Christian deaths on record. Not a word dropped from his lips, which did not breathe of Christ and heaven. His Saviour was with him in the dark vale; the arms of Christ supported him; the love and smiles of Christ

cheered his departing soul, and made death itself sweet to him. He broke out in such words as these : “ O, he is come ! he is come ! O, how glorious is the blessed Jesus ! How shall I speak the thousandth part of his praises ! O for words to set out a little of that excellency ; but it is inexpressible ! O, my friends, come look upon a dying man, and wonder ! I myself can not but wonder ! Was there ever greater kindness ? Were there ever such manifestations of rich grace ? O, why me, Lord ; why me ? If this be dying, dying is sweet ! Let no Christian be afraid of dying. O, death is sweet to me ! This bed is soft ! Christ’s arms, his smiles, his visits ; sure they would turn hell into heaven ! What are all human pleasures compared to one glimpse of his glory, which shines so strongly on my soul ? I shall soon be in eternity : I shall soon see Christ himself, who died for me, who loved me, and washed me in his blood ! I shall soon mingle in the hallelujahs of glory ! Methinks I hear the melody of heaven, and by faith I see the angels waiting to carry me to the bosom of

Jesus, and I shall be forever with the Lord ! And who can choose but rejoice in all this?"

Often he would say, "O, that I could but let you know what I now feel ! O, that I could express the thousandth part of that sweetness that I now find in Christ ! You would all then think it well worth while to make it your business to be religious. O, my dear friends, we little think what Christ is worth upon a death-bed ! I would not for a world, nay, for millions of worlds, be now without Christ and pardon "

To those around him, he said, "O that glory, the unspeakable glory that I behold ! My heart is full ; my heart is full ! Christ smiles, and I cannot but smile. The arms of my blessed Saviour are open to embrace me : the angels stand ready to carry my soul into his bosom. O, did you but see what I see, you would all cry out with me, ' How long, dear Lord ? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ! ' O, why are his chariot wheels so long in coming ? I do so long to be with Christ, that I could be contented to be cut in pieces, and to be put to the most exquisite torments,

so that I might but die and be with Christ. O, how sweet is Jesus! ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!’ Death, do thy worst! Death has lost its terribleness. Death! it is nothing to me! Death is nothing (through grace) to me. I can as easily die, as shut my eyes, or turn my head and sleep. I long to be with Christ : I long to die.”

To his christian friends who came to see him, he said, “O help me to praise God, I have nothing else to do, from this time to eternity, but to praise and love God! O, praise, praise, praise, that infinite boundless love that hath, to a wonder, looked upon my soul, and done more for me than for thousands of his children! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Help me, help me, O my friends, to praise and admire him that hath done such astonishing wonders for my soul: he hath pardoned all my sins; he hath filled me with his goodness; he hath given me grace and glory, and no good thing hath he withheld from me.”

On another occasion, he uttered such

words as these, "Admire God for ever and ever, O ye redeemed ones! O, those joys, the taste of which I have! The everlasting joys which are at his right hand for evermore! Eternity, eternity itself is too short to praise God in. O bless the Lord with me! Come let us shout for joy, and boast in the God of our salvation. O, help me to praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever." Again he said, "I shall presently behold Christ himself that died for me, and loved me, and washed me in his own blood. I shall, before a few hours are over, be in eternity, singing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon Mount Zion, with an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. I shall hear the voice of much people, and be one amongst them, who shall say, hallelujah, salvation, glory, honor and power, unto the Lord our God! And yet a little while, and I shall sing unto the Lamb a song of praise, saying, Worthy art thou to receive praise, who wert slain,

and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign with thee for ever and ever."

A few hours before his death, he said, "And now, dear Lord, my work is done. I have finished my course, I have fought the good fight; and henceforth there remaineth for me a crown of righteousness. Now come, dear Lord Jesus, come quickly." At length his course was completed, and this lovely servant of the Lord fell asleep in Jesus.

14. The great Thomas Halyburton, one of the most learned divines of Scotland, and professor of divinity in the University of St. Andrew's, breathed out his soul to God in a triumphant death. The following were his last words: "I dare look death in the face, in its most ghastly shape, and hope soon to have the victory over it. Glory, glory to him! O, what of God do I see! I have never seen any thing like it. The beginning and the end of religion are won-

derfully sweet! I long for his salvation: I bless his name, I have found him! I am taken up in blessing him; I am dying rejoicing in the Lord! O, I could not have believed that I should bear, and bear cheerfully, as I have done, this rod which hath lain long on me. This is a miracle! Pain without pain! You see a man dying; a monument of the glorious power of astonishing grace!" Some time after, he said, "When I shall be so weak as no longer to be able to speak, I will, if I can, give you a sign of triumph when I am near to glory." He did so: for when one said, "I hope you are encouraging yourself in the Lord," being now unable to speak, he lifted up his hands and clapped them, and in a few moments expired.

15. Mr. Augustus M. Toplady closed a long and eminently holy life, by a very triumphant death. He said, "O how this soul of mine longs to be gone: like an imprisoned bird, it longs to take its flight. O, that I had the wings of a dove, I should flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest

for ever! I long to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." At another time he said, "O, what a day of sunshine has this been to me! I have no words to express it; it is unutterable! O, my friends, how good our God is! Almost without interruption his presence has been with me." Being near his end, he said, "O what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heavens!" And just before he expired, he said, "The sky is clear; there is no cloud; Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

16. The Rev. Thomas Scott, the commentator, died a happy, triumphant death. The love of Christ filled his soul; and his dying bed may be said to have been sublimely christian! Among the last words he uttered were these, "Lord support me! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! Christ is my all! He is my only hope! O to realize the fullness of joy! O, to have done with temptation! This is heaven begun! I have done with darkness for ever! Satan is vanquished! Nothing remains but salvation with eternal glory, eternal glory!"

17. Dr. Condict, President of Queen's (now Rutger's) College, New Jersey, was known to be much afraid of death, but he died triumphantly. Raising himself from his pillow, he stretched out his quivering hands, and exclaimed, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me." Then he added, "Let us pray;" and having uttered a brief and solemn prayer, he gently leaned back on his pillow, and closing his eyes with his own hands, soon fell asleep in Jesus.

18. Dr. Dwight, President of Yale College, closed his useful life by a peaceful and happy death. He requested his brother to read to him the 17th chapter of John. While listening to the latter verses of that chapter, he exclaimed, "O, what triumphant truths!" Some one recited to him a part of the 23d Psalm, and asked him, "Can you now say, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear

no evil, for thou art with me?" He replied, "I hope so." He died in peace, cheered by his Saviour's presence, and love.

19. Dr. Edward Payson was an eminent christian, and a devoted minister of the Lord. He died a most triumphant death. When about to finish his course, he thus commenced a letter : " Dear sister, were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view: its glories beam upon me; its breezes fan me; its odours are wafted to me; its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached; and now fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the

beams of the sun, exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart, and a single tongue, seem altogether inadequate to my wants : I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion.”

Among the last words of this excellent and pious divine, are the following : “A young man, when about to leave the world, exclaimed, ‘The battle’s fought, the battle’s fought; but the victory is lost forever!’ But I can say, The battle’s fought, the battle’s fought, and the victory is won! The victory is won forever! I am going to bathe in an ocean of purity, and benevolence, and happiness, to all eternity!”

Again : “Hitherto I have viewed God as a fixed star; bright indeed, but often intercepted by clouds. But now he is coming nearer and nearer; and he spreads into a sun so vast, and so glorious, that the sight is too dazzling for flesh and blood to sustain!”

On one occasion, when laboring under very acute pains, he exclaimed, "These are God's arrows; but they are sharpened with love!" Once he exclaimed, "Victory, victory! Peace, peace!"

The last words he was heard to whisper, were these: "Faith and patience, hold out!" Thus died Dr. Payson; and he has left a glorious testimony to the truth of the religion of Jesus.

20. Harlan Page* was an eminent christian, and used great personal efforts for the souls of individuals; and in his death, Christ was with him. "A death-bed," said he, "is a precious place, when we have the presence of Christ — then to wake to a glorious immortality." Again: "I feel as if I had got half way home. I cannot bear to stop. It would be a pity to have the flesh return on these limbs again."

Again he said: "I commit myself to thee, Jesus, Saviour of sinners. O the infinite love of Christ! I may stop my mouth, and lie in

* See a very interesting memoir of this holy man, by W. A. Hallock, published by the American Tract Society.

the dust." He appeared to feel that he had obtained a new view of the love of Christ; therefore he said, "It seems as if I never knew before what it was to love him. O, who can help loving such a blessed Saviour!"

Again he repeated these words : "O when shall I go home? How long must I be burdened with this body ! The Lord knows how much suffering I need, to prepare me for his kingdom."

A little before his death, he exclaimed, "Home ! home !" and prayed : "O for a free and full discharge! Lord Jesus, come quickly! Why wait thy chariot wheels so long? I dedicate myself to thee. O may I have the victory! O come quickly! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

21. David Brainerd died a happy death. With perfect composure of mind, this eminent servant of God saw the approaches of dissolution. To him, death was not an enemy, but a friend : it was the long expected messenger, sent to convey him home to his heavenly Father's house; and he would exclaim, "Oh! why is the chariot so long in

coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly!" In this happy frame of mind, he expired.

22. Rev. Risdon Darracott, an eminent servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, said on his death-bed, "I am going to that Jesus whom I love, and whom I have so often preached. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Why are thy chariot wheels so long a coming?" The night before he died, he said, "O what a good God have I in Christ Jesus! I would praise him, but my lips cannot. Eternity will be too short to speak his praises." He related his experience of the goodness of God to him during his sickness, and said, "If I had a thousand lives to live, I would live them all for Christ. I have cast anchor on him, and rely on his blood, and am going to venture my all upon him. There is nothing on earth I desire! Here I am waiting! What a mercy to be in Jesus!" He then threw abroad his arms, and exclaimed, "He is coming! he is coming! But surely this can't be death! O how astonishingly is the Lord softening my passage! Surely God is too

good to such a worm! O speed thy chariot wheels! Why are they so long in coming? I long to be gone." At length he fell asleep in Jesus, whom he so much loved, and who manifested such tender love to him in the hour of death.

23. Mrs. Catharine Brettergh, a singular christian of Lancashire (England), was blessed to die a comfortable and joyful death. The following were some of her last words : "O the joys that I feel in my soul! O my sweet Saviour, shall I be one with thee, as thou art one with the Father? O wonderful is thy love to me, who am but dust! To make such as me partaker of thy glory! O that my tongue and heart were able to sound forth thy praises as I ought! "

24. The amiable and pious Hannah Housman, when on her death-bed, often said, with smiles in her face, and transports of joy : "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly! Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? O, blessed convoy! come and fetch my soul, to dwell with God, and Christ, and perfect spirits, for ever and ever. When I join that blessed

society above, my pleasures will never end. O, the glory, the glory that shall be set on the head of faith and love!"

25. Jeremiah Evarts, so well known by every friend of missionaries, died a triumphant death. Feeling the love of Christ in his last moments, he broke out into rapturous expressions: "Praise him, praise him, praise him in a way which you know not of." Some one said to him, "You will soon see Jesus as he is, and know how to praise him." He replied, "O wonderful, wonderful, wonderful glory! We cannot comprehend . . . wonderful glory! I will praise him : I will praise him ! Wonderful . . . glory . . . Jesus reigneth !"

26. Richard Cecil often exclaimed on his death-bed, with the martyr Lambert, "None but Christ; none but Christ!" As he drew nearer to death, Jesus Christ was his only topic ; and a short time before he died, he requested one of his family to write down for him in a book the following sentence : " 'None but Christ, none but Christ,' said Lambert, dying at the stake : the same, in

dying circumstances, with his whole heart, saith Richard Cecil.”

27. The Rev. John Rees, of London, uttered the following words on his death-bed : “ Christ in his person, Christ in the love of his heart, and Christ in the power of his arm, is the rock on which I rest; and now ” (reclining his head on the pillow), “ Death, strike ! ”

28. Mrs. Hannah Woodd, mother of the Rev. Basil Woodd, repeated the following words, when near her dissolution : “ Oh ! I am very happy ! I am going to my mansion in the skies. Thank God, I have a hope built on the Rock of ages. I am dying, but I am going to glory. I shall see Him as he is. I shall be forever near him, and behold his face. Blessed be God ! Blessed be God ! ”

29. Mrs. M. M. Atthans, an excellent christian lady, left this testimony to the cause of christianity : “ I bless God, I have not one fear concerning dying. That Almighty Lord, who has so wonderfully preserved me to the present moment, will not forsake me in my last extremity. No : when flesh and

heart fail, he will be the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.”

30. We shall close our records of triumphant deaths, with an account of the last hours of a remarkably pious young lady, who lately went to glory; and whose death-bed scene, it was the privilege of the author to witness.

He had often read accounts of the triumphant deaths of believers, but never before had he seen such an illustrious exhibition of divine grace, and love, manifested to a saint, in the hour of death.

Not till then, did he feel that there was such power in the religion of Jesus, to sustain, and to cheer in the hour of dissolution. This young lady had been confined to a bed of severe suffering for one year. At last her soul was ripened for glory. The time came that she must die; and her death-bed was a scene of triumph. Christ was very precious to her; and his love was wonderfully manifested to her soul. She often exclaimed, “My beloved is mine, and I am his.”*

* Cant. ii, 16.

The following are among her last words. To her distant brother she thus commenced a letter: "Dear Brother, I know not whether I shall meet you again on earth; but I hope to meet you in heaven, where we shall be for ever, singing the praises of God; where the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us, and lead us unto living fountains of waters, and where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes."

To her father who said to her, "I fear I must lose you;" she replied, "Your loss will be my gain! I have a building of God, a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And again when he said, "I think you will fall asleep in Jesus;" she responded, "It will be a happy change."

As her friends were standing around her dying bed, she said to a brother, "Have you any words to say?" He immediately repeated Psalm xxiii, 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." These words were very reviving to her.

She seemed to feel that Christ was with her in that trying moment, that his love was shed abroad in her heart; for, turning herself, she exclaimed in a transport of joy, "Oh! I would not give up Christ for all the world!"

"Whom have I in the heavens high,
But thee, O Lord, alone?
And in the earth whom I desire,
Beside thee there is none."

"I hope that I shall meet you all in heaven, where we shall be for ever with the Lord." She wished that Christ might be praised; and that he might be magnified by her dying breath. To her brother she said, "I hope you may live with Christ, and praise him throughout the endless ages of eternity."

She was asked by one, if, during her sickness she had not often experienced something like heaven upon earth, she replied that she had. Her earthly course being nearly finished, she opened her eyes which were soon to be closed in death, and in the language of strong, unshaken faith, exclaimed with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that

he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.”* Once she broke out into a rapture, and exclaimed, “O, to be ever with the Lord, what a happy change!”

A little while before her death, one said to her, “It is a happy thing when the believer can say, when about to leave the world, ‘I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.’ She said yes; and added (though with great difficulty, her breath being almost gone), “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

* Job, xix, 25 - 27.

Her faith remained firm unto the end, and her hope and confidence unshaken to the last. Her sky was clear and serene, her mind, calm and composed; and thus she fell asleep in Jesus, and entered into the joy of her Lord.

As the writer gazed upon the solemn scene before him, he could not but feel the force of Revelation xiv, 13, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." A few days before this young lady died, she requested the following verses to be read at her funeral. They are too beautiful, and impressive to be omitted here.

TO MY YOUNG COMPANIONS.

My youthful mates, both small and great,
Stand here, and you shall see,
An awful sight, which is a type
Of what you soon must be.

I used t' appear once fresh and fair
Among the youthful crowd;
But now behold me dead and cold,
Wrapped in a sable shroud.

My cheeks once red, like roses spread,
My sparkling eyes so gay;
But now you see how 'tis with me,
A lifeless lump of clay.

When you are dressed in all your best,
In fashion so complete,
You soon must be as you see me,
Wrapped in a winding sheet.

Ah, youth beware, and do prepare
To meet the monster, death;
For he may come when you are young,
And steal away your breath.

When you unto your frolics go,
Remember what I say;
In a short time, though in your prime,
You may be called away.

Now I am gone, I can't return;
No more of me you'll see;
But it is true that all of you
Must shortly follow me.

When you unto my grave do go,
The gloomy place to see,
I say to you who stand and view,
Prepare to follow me.

And now, reader, can you not say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" How important is it then that you should now choose Christ, in order that you may enjoy his love and presence, not only through life, but also in the hour of death! If you belong to Christ, you will find him, in the last hour of life, a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

What an awful thing it is to die without salvation by Christ, without an interest in him; and yet millions live without God, and without hope in the world; and millions more die in the same awful condition, and plunge into a dark and miserable eternity. O, be admonished to choose Christ in time, and he will be your's in death, and in eternity. Oh! blessed thought. How unspeakably blessed it is to enjoy the love and smiles of Christ in a dying hour!

Then what can the world do for you? The tears of your friends, and the exertions of your physicians, will then be unavailing.

It is Christ alone that can make a dying-bed easy and comfortable. His love and presence will sustain you, and his almighty arm support you.

“Though unseen by human eye,
The Redeemer's hand is nigh:
He has poured salvation's light
Far within the vale of night;
There will God my steps control,
There his presence bless my soul.
Lord, whate'er my sorrows be,
Teach me to look up to thee.”

“He who is thus with you,” says an excellent writer, “will afford all needful comfort and support in the trying hour. He will open at that time treasures of grace and strength, to which you had been previously a stranger. The Redeemer himself is present, not only to guide his saints, but to infuse that comfort and vigor which will abundantly compensate for the sinkings of expiring nature. Who but those who have entered heaven, can tell what unearthly joys are vouchsafed the saint in a dying hour? Often, there is reason to believe, they transcend every thing possessed in the present life. There may be visions of glory realized by the spirit, which are second only to those of heaven. The dying experience of many saints has been of the most delightful kind. Whether such hopes and joys as were afforded to Janeway and others, will be vouchsafed to you, you know not; nor is it necessary you should know. Whatever is needful for you in a dying hour, Christ will bestow. He says, “My grace is sufficient for thee.”* Remember, that he has said,

* 2 Cor. xii, 9.

“Fear not, I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”*

When we contemplate those, whose deaths we have recorded in this volume, we may justly say, “These all died in faith:” and, reader, let us also be “followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”† “Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”‡

If you belong to Christ, he will love you in life, in death, and in that happy home, which his love has prepared for you.

In conclusion, christian reader, you will soon exchange the abodes of mortality for the regions of bliss. Then look beyond the grave. Do not confine your thoughts to this gloomy place. Contemplate the sublime raptures of your future existence beyond the precincts of time. Christ shall one day

* Rev. i, 17, 18. † Heb. vi, 12. ‡ Heb. xii, 1, 2.

break the slumbers of the grave, and you will arise to immortality.

The love of Christ does not stop at death. It extends beyond this solemn period. It will accompany you into the heavenly world; your everlasting happy home: and you will soon arrive there. From the valley of the shadow of death you shall ascend to the summit of Zion. You shall "Come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."* For the darkness of mortality, you shall obtain the bright glories of heaven. "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."† You will possess the promised land, the heavenly Canaan. Then

* Heb. xii, 22 - 24.

† Is. xxxiii, 17.

shall the days of your mourning be ended. Raised in the likeness of your blessed Redeemer, you shall, finally, be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Entering the fair mansions of glory, you shall reign with your glorified Redeemer, for ever and ever. O! happy issue to the Christian's short pilgrimage on earth!

With such cheering prospects to be realized, reader, can you not also say, in the prospect of death, with many dying saints, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

In the following chapters we shall contemplate that happy home which Christ, in his great love for a lost world, has now gone to prepare for his children. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."*

* 2 Cor. v, 1.

“How happy is the dying saint,
Whose sins are all forgiven;
With joy he passes Jordan’s flood,
Upheld by hopes of heaven.

The Saviour, whom he truly lov’d,
Now cheers him by his grace;
A glory gilds his dying bed,
And beams upon his face.

Ecstatic joy and heavenly bliss
Swell his enraptured heart;
He views the promis’d land of rest,
And pants for his depart.

Terror and dread are both unknown;
Sweet peace and hope appear,
To guide the blessed traveller home,
And all his footsteps cheer.

Angels of light attendant wait
His spirit to convey
Beyond this drear abode of night,
To realms of endless day,

Oh! may I live the life of faith,
Abound in holy love,
Till death shall bear my joyful soul
To Zion’s courts above.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE HAPPY HOME IN VIEW.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you."—John xiv, 2.

"As when the weary trav'ller gains
The height of some o'er-looking hill,
His heart revives, if cross the plains
He eyes his home, tho' distant still.

While he surveys the much loved spot,
He slights the space that lies between;
His past fatigues are now forgot,
Because his journey's end is seen.

Thus when the christian pilgrim views
By faith, his mansion in the skies,
The sight his fainting strength renews,
And wings his speed to reach the prize.

The thought of home his spirit cheers,
No more he grieves for troubles past;
Nor any future trial fears,
So he may safe arrive at last.

'Tis there he says I am to dwell
With Jesus, in the realms of day;
Then I shall bid my cares farewell,
And he will wipe my tears away.

Jesus, on thee our hope depends,
To lead us on to thine abode;
Assur'd our home will make amends
For all our toil while on the road."—NEWTON.

Christ has not only manifested his love to a lost world in his incarnation, sufferings, and death, but also in going to prepare a place, a happy home, for those whose salvation he has accomplished. Said the blessed Redeemer, to his sorrowful disciples, when he was about to leave the world, "I go to prepare a place for you."*

Christ has manifested most amazing love to believers, in preparing for their eternal abode, mansions of glory, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heaven is a prepared place for believers; prepared by Christ in his infinite love. The love of Christ will make heaven a glorious, happy abode indeed. Oh! what a happy home will heaven be. Thither all the redeemed shall finally assemble, to spend one eternal day in the glorious presence of Immanuel. Who can fully describe the joys of the Christian's happy home? Feeble mortals could not comprehend the description if it should be given.

What human mind can conceive of the unspeakable blessedness which awaits the child of God in that upper and better world, his happy home! Dear believer, to know what heaven really is, you must put off mortality. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

Is not your happy home always in view? Do you not long for the approach of that joyful day, which will introduce you into the mansions of glory—bring you to your endless, happy home? How short is the space that lies between you and glory! The time, how short! Already is the night far spent. The day is at hand; that blessed day which will bring each weary christian traveller home, and seat him in his Father's house; that house not made with hands, in which there are many mansions, and one for you, O reader, if you are seeking with all your heart the happy home. Christian, the map of heaven is laid wide open for your inspection. Often obtain a glimpse of the happy land.

* 1 Cor. ii, 9.

Be always looking heavenward and homeward. Let heaven be always in your eye, and the earth under your feet, and in a little while God shall wipe away all tears : you will reach your journey's end ; then faith shall be turned into vision ; hope, into fruition ; and you will be fully satisfied with the goodness of God's house.

As you now survey the glories of your happy home, does not your heart exult at the prospect ? And is not the thought of home at all times refreshing ? What name is more endearing than home, sweet home ; around which so many hallowed associations cluster ?

Christian, heaven is your only true home. Here you have no continuing city nor place of abode. The divine command is, "Arise ye, and depart ; for this is not your rest."* "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."† God has provided a better home for you, than this polluted world. O, remember that you are a stranger and pilgrim on earth. Let your course be onward in the christian's journey. Quicken your pace on the road to glory. Your happy home will

* Micah ii, 10.

† Heb. iii, 9.

not be always in view : it will soon be in possession.

Reader, are you pressing forward to the happy home? Is heaven the home which you expect to reach? Do you long to arrive at those everlasting mansions in the skies? Let the hope of eternal glory elevate your affections above all sublunary objects. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*

The ultimate object of Christ's mediatorial work is to bring sinners to glory — to God's house — to the happy home : there they are to live; there to reign forever; there to be ever with the Lord. God will bring all his dear children home to glory. Then he will receive them, and be a father unto them, and they will be his sons and daughters. They will be forever with their kind heavenly

* Col. iii, 1 - 4.

Father — with their blessed elder Brother— with prophets and apostles—with saints and angels — with one another. What a happy meeting ! What blessed society will the saints enjoy ! Then they will have gained the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. They will receive those crowns of glory which fade not away. They shall be kings and priests unto God. They shall serve him day and night in his temple above. Blest abode ! Delightful employment, that of praising God ! Happy they ! who are to spend eternity in such a home ; contrasted with the glories of which, this earth is darkness itself.

Christian, soon shall the interposing vail of mortality be drawn aside, and you will behold the glories of that land which no mortal pen can now describe. But is heaven soon to be your happy home ? Are you there to reign with Jesus, in the realms of everlasting day ; there to behold the uncreated glory of Immanuel ? Oh ! then, how trifling should the transient concerns of earth appear to you ! You should smile at the frowns of

time. The angry tempest will soon be over. The swelling waves of life's ocean will soon rise no more. You will soon have reached the desired haven of eternal rest, the blessed shores of immortality, the happy home; and that home will more than compensate for all the toil by the way.

“ Soon will you reach the blest abode,
Where happy pilgrims ever reign;
Soon shall you see the face of God,
And all the bliss of heaven obtain.”

Live with your happy home always in view. Let the glories of a coming eternity revive your drooping spirits, amidst life's trials and life's conflicts. The road to glory is but a short one. A moment of time intervenes, and then eternal ages commence to roll away. After this moment has passed, you will enter upon a state of endless felicity. Arrived at your happy home, you will take up an everlasting song of praise; you will celebrate the victories of redeeming love, through one unending day. You have overcome, through the blood of the Lamb. You have been more than a conqueror, through

him that loved you. And now you shall stand a monument of God's love, and mercy, and grace; you shall be made a pillar in his glorious temple above, whence there shall be no more going out. You shall live with Christ, and praise him throughout the endless ages of eternity. You shall behold Immanuel in his unveiled glory. You shall praise him for that unbounded love, which has obtained for you immortal bliss. O christian! the love of Christ has procured that unfading wreath of glory, which will one day be entwined around your brow; that radiant diadem which you will forever wear. The love of Christ has prepared a happy home for your reception, when this sublunary scene shall have vanished from your mortal vision.

Believer, all the happiness you enjoy in time; and all the glory that will crown you through eternity, flow from the love of Christ. Make him your boast in time, your all in all; and may he be formed in you, the hope of glory. Happy they! who have fled for refuge to the world's Redeemer. He will carry them to glory. Reader, may

this precious Saviour be yours, in life, in death, and in eternity. Conducted by the Captain of your salvation, you will also reach the christian's happy home, and realize the joys of a blessed immortality.

Oh! what glorious prospects are presented to the eye of faith, the spiritual vision of the christian! He views the never-ending glories of the heavenly kingdom; and in that view he loses the sight of terrestrial grandeur. He quickly glides over the narrow stream of time; till he finds himself sailing on the vast unbounded ocean of eternity, an eternity of blessedness. He lifts his eyes to the hills, from whence cometh his help; those everlasting hills which tower aloft, beyond the swellings of Jordan; beyond the valley of the shadow of death. He expects soon to reach the heights of Zion. "They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*

In the mean time, O my soul, meditate upon the glories of thy happy home. What must be the feelings of the christian, when he views all heaven as his own; when he

* Psalm lxxxiv, 7.

can claim all the delights of the celestial paradise as his, and looks upon the world to come as his eternal happy home!

Come, christian, survey the happy land, your everlasting home. Life is fast hastening away. The oscillating tides of time are bearing you onward and homeward. Every wave of life's tempestuous ocean is only wafting you to the happy shores of a blessed eternity. Then look beyond this poor dying world! Look at that eternal home which Christ has prepared for you! View the celestial city, irradiated by the glory of God and the Lamb! See the pearly gates, the golden streets, the shining inhabitants of the New Jerusalem! The uncreated glory of God will enlighten that city of everlasting habitation, which the love of Christ has prepared.

Oh! what a blessed habitation has Christ prepared for believers! What a glorious inheritance has he promised them! Come, my soul, and survey it.

*

“My soul on Pisgah’s mount ascend,
Where Moses once admiring stood;
There view the promised land extend
Beyond the swelling Jordan’s flood.

By faith survey the landscape o’er,
Where living waters gently flow;
Till earth usurp thy love no more;
Till all thy kindling passions glow.

In that blessed region of delight,
The saints nor sin nor sorrow feel,
Eternal day excludes the night,
And all possess the spirit’s seal.

The ransomed soul in glory clad,
Shines brighter than meridian sun;
The weary pilgrim, now so sad,
There finds his toilsome journey done.”

O my soul, rise and soar aloft to the heavenly Canaan! Mount up as upon eagles’ wings, and behold the king in his beauty, and the land that is afar off. Leave the world to those who seek their pleasures and happiness in its perishing enjoyments, and set thy affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

How the world recedes from your view, as you obtain a glimpse of the heavenly land! The short-lived pleasures of earth, and the

transient show of sublunary magnificence, no longer fascinate the mind, as it gains a Pisgah view of the christian's endless, happy home, the glories of which baffle all description. The love of Christ is most illustriously manifested to believers, in his going to prepare such a home for them. O matchless love! that Jesus has not only died for sinners, but has gone to prepare mansions above, where they shall reign with him in eternal glory! Hasten on, O joyful day, when the redeemed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs; when ransomed sinners shall commence to celebrate the wonders of redeeming love in mansions of glory!

Look forward, christian reader, to the consummation of your bliss. With joy anticipate the glories of the resurrection morning; a morning that will dawn upon the glorified saint, without a single cloud to darken his beatific vision, or obscure the glorious rays of the Sun of righteousness, that will arise with healing in his beams, and forever gladden the hearts of millions of happy saints. Oh! what a happy day will

that be, when all the children of God shall reach their everlasting home; those mansions in the skies, where all are perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God through eternity.

Dear believer, in humble confidence in God, wait with patience till the coming of the Lord Jesus; till you are brought into the full possession of the heavenly inheritance. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."*

Blessed Jesus! keep me by thy almighty power through faith unto salvation. Spiritualize my affections — elevate my views to the world of glory. Wean my heart from the fleeting enjoyments of this mortal life, this perishing earth. Satisfy me with thy goodness and mercy; visit me with thy sal-

* 1 Peter i, 3 - 5.

vation, and at last bring me home to thyself in glory.

“Then let my soul forever raise
The incense of adoring praise;
And join the heavenly choirs above,
In sweetest songs of grateful love.”

Reader! look beyond this sublunary scene of changing mortality.

“All, all on earth is shadow; all beyond
Is substance. * * * *
How solid all, where change shall be no more!”

Soar aloft on the wings of faith, and roam in imagination through the myriads of ages that lie beyond the precincts of time; and in those regions of immortality prepared for the just, you will realize the joys of endless life, of an immortal existenece, and of an inheritance before which the splendor of a thousand worlds fades; which will endure when this earth and all terrestrial glory shall have passed away, and when the sun shall have cast his last rays, and the stars have set in endless night!”

“Life’s theatre as yet is shut; and death,
Strong death alone, can heave the massy bar,
This gross impediment of clay remove.

* * * * * And spring to life,
The life of gods; oh transport! and of man.”

“Now unto him that is able to keep you
from falling, and to present you faultless
before the presence of his glory with ex-
ceeding joy; to the only wise God our Sa-
viour, be glory and majesty, dominion and
power, both now and ever, amen.”*

* Jude i, 24, 25.

CHAPTER X.

THE HAPPY HOME CONTEMPLATED—BEING WITH CHRIST IN GLORY.

“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am”—JOHN xvii, 24.

“So shall we ever be with the Lord.”—1 THESS. iv, 17.

In those blest regions of delight,
Where Jesus is unveil'd to sight,
No mortal tongue can e'er express
The ransom'd sinner's blessedness.

What mortal pen can describe the glowing beauties of Immanuel's land! What mortal tongue can express the blessedness of the saints, when gazing upon the heaven-bright glories of Immanuel's form, and dwelling forever in his glorious presence, under the resplendent beams of the Sun of righteousness! This is what the eye hath not seen; what the ear hath not heard; what the heart of man has never conceived. But yet this blessedness awaits all the saints, and will abide with them through the incessant flow of eternity's immeasurable ages. O, happy thought!

Dear christian reader, Christ has, in his infinite love, now gone to prepare a place, an endless happy home for you; but he will come again, and receive you to himself. He will not always leave you in this vale of tears. No : when this short life is ended, you will “depart and be with Christ;” you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Christ will bring you to his Father’s house, where his glorious presence is enjoyed without a medium. He will welcome you to the mansions of glory, to the kingdom of heaven. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”* “I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”†

Thus spake our Saviour before he left this world — before he ascended to heaven from Mount Olivet. But there is a day coming, when that same Saviour shall break through the clouds of heaven; “when he shall come

* Matth. xxv, 34.

† John xiv, 2, 3.

to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day.”

Job obtained a glimpse of this day. He starts forward on the wings of faith, and beholds through the lapse of many ages the divine form of his Redeemer. He sees him with his very eyes. “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.”*

Christ shall come again, to gather his children home, to that place which he has prepared for them. Then shall the word of command, issued from his blessed lips, go forth : “Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be

* Job xix, 25 - 27.

caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”* Then shall we be ever in his presence, where there is fullness of joy and pleasure forever.

It is Christ’s presence that will make the very heaven of happiness, the very centre of felicity. It is being with Christ that will constitute the purest, brightest, noblest heaven. What would heaven be to the saints, did they not enjoy the presence of Christ? It would be no heaven to them, though they were surrounded with the glories of the New Jerusalem.

O Blessed Jesus ! may we be going up through this wilderness world, leaning upon thee; walking by faith; loving and serving thee; and may we finally be brought to behold thy glorious face in the realms of light, in the paradise above, and be ever with thee.

“ What is the world, but grief and care?
What heaven, if thou be absent there?
Thy glorious face illumines the sky,
And sheds ecstatic joys on high.”

* 1 Thess. iv, 16, 17.

It is in the presence of Christ, that we will participate in those pleasures which are at God's right hand. "In thy presence is fullness of joy : at thy right hand, there are pleasures for evermore."*

Oh! to be ever with the Lord! What human mind can comprehend the blessedness of such a state? Christ knows this blessedness; and how fervently he prays, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."† This prayer will be answered. We shall soon be with Christ. We shall soon behold his glory. Then shall we see Him as he is; even Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; who died on Calvary for us; whose blessed hands, and side, and feet were pierced for us; and whose precious blood flowed so freely to wash away our sins: to Him be glory forever! Oh! blessed sight. Then shall we gaze forever upon the uncreated glory of Immanuel, shining forth in full unclouded splendor. Then shall we behold the glory of that blessed Redeemer,

* Psalm xvi, 11.

† John xvii, 24.

who left the regions of bliss, to assume mortal flesh and die for us. Then shall we see with our very eyes, Him who was crucified for us on Calvary; but, oh! we shall see Him shining with inconceivable glory. The glory of Christ will attract the eyes of all the redeemed, and he will be forever “admired in all them that believe.” “The Word was made flesh;”* and the glory of God shall shine through that flesh, making that blessed body more glorious than a thousand suns.

The saints shall dwell forever in the presence of Immanuel. Thrice happy they, who are to spend eternity in beholding his radiant glory, and in encompassing his throne with everlasting songs of salvation! Then shall it be proclaimed through the heavenly mansions, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”†

In heaven, the saints will enjoy the society of the Lord himself; which is the perfection of happiness. Says Christ, “Where I am, there shall also my servant be.” O! to be

* John i, 14.

† Rev. xxi, 3.

ever near Him; to see Him as he is; to be like him; to behold his glory; to have that glory revealed in us; to praise Him eternally in the mansions above : what a happy home will this be! “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”*

Oh, to be like the blessed Jesus; to see him in glory! What heart would desire more? Then shall we commence to tread with our elder Brother, and dear Redeemer, the ceaseless round of eternity. Then shall the wonders of his love be incessantly unfolded before us; causing new songs of praise to ascend from our enraptured souls, to Him that sitteth upon the throne. Who can express the delights the saints must feel, when they look into the face of Christ, and there read his tender love to them! But oh how completely engulphed in the abyss of infinite love, and lost in wonder and praise, must our souls be, when we gaze upon the scars which mark

* 1 John iii, 2.

the hands and feet and side of our blessed Saviour, and there read the immensity of that love which made him die for us! "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."† In those blessed regions, where He is unveiled to the sight of mortals, Jesus will gladden our hearts with perpetual joy, and love us with an everlasting love.

It is the privilege of believers to be with Christ; to spend eternity in his presence; to gaze forever upon the Sun of Righteousness, shining in his meridian splendor. That sun will never set in the "new heavens." His beams will always irradiate the city of our God, our happy dwelling place.

Christ's presence will make our "Father's house" a glorious home, a happy abode, a blessed habitation. Where he is, there will heaven be. His glorious presence will illuminate the abode of the blessed, the realms of everlasting day. And, believer, when you come to dwell in those blissful mansions, his presence, his society, his love, and his celes-

* Rev. v, 6.

tial voice will cause your enraptured soul to rejoice; and eternity will be spent in being with him, and in beholding his glory.

“ Oh! to hear that voice speak ineffable peace and consolation to your soul; to see Him as he is, whose glory infinitely surpasses all objects of nature and of art; to see those dear hands, and feet, and head, whose wounds in suffering for you will be more brilliant and beautiful in your eye than the topaz of Ethiopia : yea, to have his glory revealed in you; to be perfectly like him, and to reign with him: what a heaven will this be! Then your unbounded desires, which the whole creation could not limit, shall be satisfied with the full fruition of immortal love. You shall be refreshed with the emanations of uncreated life and joy, and shall drink at the fountain-head of pleasure. You shall mingle with society the most pure, perfect and lovely, whose glory is only surpassed by that of Him that sitteth upon the throne. You shall dwell with kindred spirits, in everlasting harmony. Your employment shall combine all the excellencies of ease, delight, and perpetuity. You will have nothing to do but to

worship and serve God, and shall have ability to worship and serve him forever.”*

What a happy home will heaven be, where we shall be ever with the Lord! How happy will the saints be, when they come to dwell in that heavenly home — in that glorious palace, where “He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them;” † where “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” ‡

Of that celestial city, in which the saints are to make their eternal home, it is said “the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.” ||

The saints, in heaven, shall see Christ with their bodily eyes. We shall see Him, who loved us, and gave himself for us. “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face.” § Yes, we shall behold His glorious face, and be fully satisfied with his immortal love.

* Sherman. † Rev. vii, 15. ‡ Rev. vii, 17.

|| Rev. xxii, 3, 4. § 1 Cor. xiii, 12.

Dear christian reader, we hope shortly to exchange the trials and afflictions of this vale of tears — this suffering, dying world, for the glories of eternity; and be ever with the Lord. Then will we have done with transitory life, with grief and care. Then will we drink of affliction's bitter cup no more, and death itself will have lost its power over us. Then shall we be lodged in the regions of immortality, and be ever with the Lord. And when ten thousand times ten thousand years have rolled away; when ages countless as the stars which deck the midnight sky have run their ample round, it may be said that we are, as it were, just beginning to be ever with the Lord; that we are just beginning to behold his glory, and to look into that wonderful counsel of love, that glorious plan of salvation, which will be our theme of meditation, of wonder, and of praise through the ceaseless ages of eternity. Then shall we know the joy of being with Christ. Then, there shall be no more separation between Christ and his people : they shall then be brought near him, and abide with him forever.

“O glorious hour! O blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God!
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasure of the soul.”

It will be Christ's amazing love that will then fill our hearts with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It will be the brighter manifestation of that love which will cause our souls to overflow with ecstatic joy, as we dwell in the presence of Immanuel, and surround his throne, and behold his glory. Then shall we be better “able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” Then shall we “be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Oh! the infinite love of Christ, that he should bring sinners to glory, to dwell in his presence, to spend eternity with him! “So shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

“By faith I see the hour at hand,
When in his presence I shall stand:
Then will it be my endless bliss,
To see him where and as he is.”—NEWTON,

* 1 Thess. iv, 17.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HAPPY HOME CONTEMPLATED.—THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE SAINTS.

“In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”—PSALM xvi, 11.

Come, O, my soul, retire from the noise, bustle, and tumult of a vain departing world, and contemplate thy happy home in the heavens! Look beyond this present fleeting scene of existence, and view thy future, eternal resting place; and may the bright glories of heaven, elevate thy views and raise thy affections above the transitory pleasures of this decaying scene.

Under the pleasing emblem of a happy home, heaven is most beautifully set forth. Christ calls it his Father’s house. “In my Father’s house are many mansions.”* If we are the children of God, we may also call it our Father’s house, our happy home; and each believer may say with the Psalmist, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”†

* John xiv, 2,

† Psalm xxiii, 6.

Heaven is also described as a glorious city. In his sublime vision of the heavenly world, John thus speaks; "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;" "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."* The streets of this city are of gold; and the gates of peral. "And the twelve gates were twelve perals; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."† And John adds, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it."‡

In this celestial city which is thus beautified by the creative power of God, and enlightened with his glory, the saints are to spend the ceaseless ages of a glorious, and happy eternity. This is that city which prophets and apostles and saints of every age, have desired, and longed for; that city which Abraham, when "he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country,"

* Rev. xxi. 2, 11. † Rev. xxi, 21. ‡ Rev. xxi, 22.

looked for. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*

Heaven is that "better country" which all the saints of old, who "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," desired and sought to obtain "But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."† To this heavenly home, God will bring all his children, and Jesus will there dwell among them, for ever and ever.

When all the saints shall be brought home to be for ever with the Lord, they will be perfectly blessed. They will enjoy the full assurance of Christ's love, and the eternal smiles of his countenance! What heart can conceive the unutterable bliss of the Redeemed, when brought into the glorious palace of the great King, where there is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. They will be far from a world of grief, and sin. They will be beyond the

* Heb. xi, 10.

† Heb. xi, 16.

reach of suffering. No gloom or sorrow shall ever becloud their bright spirits in the presence of Christ. They shall be for ever happy with him. Reaching the happy shores of Immanuel's land, they shall dwell with God. They shall see him "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* Their souls shall be filled with unutterable bliss, amid the splendors of the beatific vision, and the sublime raptures of celestial joys. The ineffable glories of the Deity, shall then beam forth upon the redeemed. And, "Then shall the righteous shine forth, as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."† To the love of Christ the saints will owe all their blessedness in another world.

Let us contemplate this blessedness. In the word of God we see it described. In the 7th chapter of Revelation there is contained a glimpse of heaven—of the redeemed in glory.

There we find that when all the redeemed shall be brought home to glory, they will form a mighty host. "After this I beheld,

* Matt. v, 8.

† Matt. xiii, 43.

and, lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.”* Millions of Adam’s sons and daughters shall be brought to glory, through the merits of Immanuel.

There we find whence this mighty multitude came. To the questions, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” it is answered “These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”†

The saints have travelled a rough road to glory, and have come out of great tribulation. Many of them have gone through the fires of persecution, and their souls have ascended to glory amid the flames of martyrdom. Many of that blessed number who now stand before God, “were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword,” were once “destitute, afflicted, tormented;”‡ but they have come out of all

* Rev. vii, 9.

† Rev. vii, 14.

‡ Heb. xi, 37.

their tribulations, and are now happy before the throne of God.

The saints have all washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. They are invested with the snowy, spotless robe of the Redeemer's righteousness. "This" says an eloquent writer,* "is the only garb which a child of Adam can wear before the throne of God. And though the apparel of some may be more curiously wrought and exquisitely embroidered than that of others, though the hand of the beautifying Spirit may have made it 'raiment of needle-work'—the hue and lustre of each is the same. Every spirit in glory wears the vesture radiant with redeeming righteousness—the snowy robe which speaks of the fountain opened, and which will commemorate through eternity, the blood of the Lamb."

The employment of the saints in heaven is also described in this glorious vision. They serve God. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."† "They cry with

* Rev. J. Hamilton, of London.

† Rev. vii, 15.

a loud voice, saing, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”* “And his servants shall serve him.”†

What a contrast is there between the service of God on earth, and in heaven! Here, all our divine services are imperfectly performed : there, all is perfection itself. Here, when the spirit is often willing, the flesh is weak, and soon wearied, even in the sweetest seasons of devotion and heavenly meditation : there “ they rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”‡ And again, “ Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”||

The employment of redeemed saints will be that of everlasting praise and adoration. They will praise and admire the Saviour, for his unbounded love and goodness to them. They will contemplate that glorious salva-

* Rev. vii, 10.

‡ Rev. iv, 8.

† Rev. xxii, 3,

|| Rev, iv, 11.

tion, of which “the prophets have inquired and searched diligently,” and which “the angels desire to look into.” Redemption and salvation by Christ will constitute their unending theme; in the contemplation of which, their souls shall be lost in wonder, love and praise.

A crucified Saviour will be the wonder of heaven, and will employ ransomed souls in holy meditations through an inconceivable eternity. “Christ crucified,” says an excellent old divine,* “is the library which triumphant souls will be studying in to all eternity.” Eternity itself will be too short, in which to unfold the wonders of redeeming love, or to speak the praises of that blessed Redeemer who was crucified on Calvary for a sinful world. With increasing wonder and admiration shall that ransomed host, who stand upon Mount Zion, eternally search into the wonders of Christ’s redeeming love as manifested to them. And all the redeemed, casting their crowns before the throne in token of their own unworthiness, shall unite in one long, loud, adoring anthem of praise;

* Bishop Stillingfleet in *Origines Sacræ*, lib. 3, c. 6.

in one grand, everlasting chorus : ‘ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.’ ‘ Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.’* They sing unceasing praises to him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood. ‘ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.’† ‘ They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty : just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!’” ‡

Such is the employment of heaven; and its blessed inhabitants shall have power and ability to worship and serve God without weariness, forever.

The saints shall be perfectly happy in the presence of Christ. Free from all sorrow, they shall possess immortal joys in the pre-

* Rev. v, 12, 13. † Rev. i, 5, 6. ‡ Rev. xv, 3, 4.

sence of Him who sitteth on the throne. They shall not know what sorrow is, any more. All tears shall be wiped away; for "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

Here, the saints weep, and wail, and experience the distressing calamities and sorrows of mortal life. They feel the mutations of this ever varying scene. They are often in the depths of adversity and distress. They also experience changes in the spiritual life. To-day they may be on Pisgah, with heaven in their view, rejoicing; to-morrow, in the valley of Baca, weeping. To-day, the sunshine of christianity may illumine their path; to-morrow they may wander about, enveloped in spiritual darkness. Here, the dearest ties are cut asunder, and the tenderest cords broken; which causes the heart to

* Rev. vii, 15 - 17.

overflow with sorrow. Our friends die, and tears trickle down our cheeks; and perhaps we ourselves go down with sorrow to the grave. “Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure.”*

Thus the saints keenly feel the sorrows of this mortal state; but in heaven, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.”†

In heaven, the saints shall obtain everlasting joy. “Everlasting joy shall be unto them.”‡ “Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head : they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”|| “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come

* Psalm lxxx, 5.

† Isaiah lxi, 7.

‡ Rev. xxi, 4.

|| Isaiah li, 11.

again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”* And then “the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”† Our joy in heaven shall be full, satisfying, and eternal.

The redeemed shall be free from all the sufferings, pains, and diseases that afflict humanity, and render this mortal life one continual scene of distress. In that happy world, “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick : the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.”‡

Immortal health and vigor bloom in heaven. Sin, the cause of sickness, and pain, and sorrow, shall be excluded from that blessed world. There, no tears bedew the cheek, no sorrows rend the heart, no pain is felt, no dissolution is feared; for death itself is swallowed up in victory. “And there shall be no more death.”

This is nothing but a dying world. Here, death strikes its dart, and cuts down our dearest friends. Perhaps he who now reads these lines may have stood over the dying bed of a dear relative or friend, and, with bitter sorrow, taken the last farewell, and

* Psalm cxxvi, 5, 6. † Is. lx, 21. ‡ Is. xxxiii, 24.

witnessed the death-struggles of him or her whom he loved.

Death annually sweeps off a multitude of the human race. The sun now shines upon the graves of thousands, who, but a year ago, bloomed with health and vigor. Where are they now? Gone. Now they are numbered among the dead. Now, clad with all the habiliments of the grave, they lie cold and lifeless in death's narrow house — in the grave's dismal mansion.

In heaven there shall be no more death, nor painful separation of kindred souls. Eternal life shall be enjoyed by the blessed inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. The last enemy shall have been destroyed. Then will God say, concerning his redeemed ones, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction."* Then, "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality : then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."†

* Hosea xiii, 14.

† 2 Cor. xv, 53, 54.

In those celestial mansions, all the immortal sons of God shall meet in blissful harmony and adoring praise, to be forever with the Lord.

The saints shall enjoy eternal rest in heaven. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest."* They shall be perfectly holy and happy; and shall eternally bask in the sunshine of God's immediate presence, and drink of those perennial streams that issue from the fountain of life. The Lamb shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of waters.†

* Job iii, 17.

† "The Godhead is a boundless sea, on which the thin island of creation floats; and though the region be ever so dry and arid—a burning Baca—and though the object be ever so bleak and bald—a grim Horeb, a flinty rock—it needs only the touch of the prophet's rod, and forthwith a fountain springs as exhaustless as that divine perfection whence it flows. In that better country the Horeb never staunches, and the Baca never dries: the fountains play perpetually, and the waters ever live; and the Lamb is familiar with them all. To the woody brink of one he leads his white-robed followers; and in its fringing glories and populous profound, they read the riches of creative power and skill. To the melodious verge of another he conducts

The saints shall spend an everlasting day of light and blessedness in Immanuel's land; "and there shall be no night there." Eternal day smiles in those blessed regions. "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."*

In that bright world which the saints are going to possess, all will be irradiated by the glory of God and of the Lamb. The glorious Sun of righteousness will illuminate the heavenly world, the celestial city. "Thy sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light

them; and in the fountain of light which gushes high, and flings its rainbows wide; in the balm scattered by its wafted dews, and the song with which the branches wave, they hear it endlessly repeated, 'God is love.' And to another still he guides them; and simple as the margin looks, and limpid as the waters are, it dilates and deepens as they gaze; deepens, till it mocks the longest line; widens, till Gabriel's eye can see no shore; and in its fathomless abyss, and ever-retreating bound, they recognize the divine unsearchableness. In Paradise, every fountain lives, and each fountain is a lesson full of God."— Rev. J. HAMILTON.

* Isaiah lx, 20.

unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.”*

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there.”†

The saints “shall inherit all things,” and “reign with Christ forever and ever.” Such is the blessedness of the saints; and to crown all their heavenly bliss, it will be eternal. Heaven is a state of never-ending bliss. Eternity stamps an infinite value on celestial happiness.

“O ye blest scenes of permanent delight!
Full, above measure! lasting, beyond bound!
A perpetuity of bliss, is bliss.”

With regard to perpetuity, what a striking contrast is there between earthly and heavenly joys! How transient are all sublunary pleasures? “Passing away,” is indelibly stamped upon all that is terrestrial. “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.”‡

* Is. lx, 19. † Rev. xxi, 23 - 25. ‡ 1 John ii. 17.

Youth and beauty, health and strength, riches and honor are passing away. Incessant changes characterize this globe, and all its inhabitants; but no such changes are known in heaven.

“Lord, I long to be at home,
Where these changes never come!
Where the saints no winter fear,
Where 'tis spring throughout the year;
How unlike this state below!
There the flowers unwithering blow,
There no chilling blasts annoy,
All is love, and bloom, and joy.”—NEWTON.

The joys of the christian's happy home never ends. The pleasures which are at God's right hand endure for ever,

“Oh yes! those sweet words for ever, shall be attaced to every thing in glory, You shall eat of the tree of life; drink of the water of life; wear the crown of life; you shall be made a pillar in the temple of God, and there shall be no more going out.”

But Oh! what is the for ever of heaven, who can describe it? who can comprehend vast eternity, the measure of the saint's bliss?

“Were the house you inhabit,” says a very pious, solemn writer* “to be filled with the finest sand, and then emptied so slowly that but the smallest grain should be taken out once in ten thousand years, how many millions of ages would pass away before the last grain were removed! yet, compared with eternity, these countless years would be like the twinkling of an eye. Were the mighty seas which dash their waves upon so many shores, to be suddenly changed into one mass of ink, and then to be employed in numbering down figures, and the least figure to signify a million of years, what countless ages would be numbered down before the seas were emptied; yet he who wrote the last figure might say, ‘These ages are not eternity; they are nothingness itself, compared with that; less than one drop to all the sea; less than one moment to all these infinite years; they are like a tale that is told; or a sigh that is forgotten.’

Were this vast world one mass of sand, and were the Most High, by his infinite

* Rev. J. G. Pike.

power, to create as many worlds as there might be grains of sand in this; and were he then to commission a ministering angel to destroy them all, by removing grain after grain, yet so slowly that he should remove but one grain in a million of years, what millions, and millions, and millions of years, beyond all thought and conception, would pass away before one world were thus destroyed! and O, what before all these numbers were! What an eternity would be here! An eternity! no, not a moment, compared with it. Sand after sand would be removed, though at so infinitely slow a rate; world after world would be destroyed; and the angel would finish his task, but not finish eternity. Eternity would be eternity still. One grain of sand would bear some proportion to these numberless worlds; one moment to these countless millions of ages; but all these would bear none to eternity; when they were passed, it would still be 'beginning—rather beginning to begin.'” Such is the for ever of heaven.

Eternity! who can grasp the immense idea which this short word conveys? When millions and millions of ages shall have passed away, the blessed inhabitants of Immanuel's land will be young in immortality, and there will still be stretched before them an "evermore," in which they will enjoy perfect blessedness at God's right hand.

Oh! what a blessed, happy home is heaven. "And what a home for us to return to and abide in forever! A home prepared before the foundation of the world. A home in the many mansions; a home in the innermost circle of creation, nearest the throne and heart of God; a home whose peace shall never be broken by the sound of war or tempest, whose brightness shall never be overcast by the remotest shadow of a cloud. How so-lacing to the weary spirit, to think of a resting place so near, and that resting-place our Father's house, where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; where the sun shall not light on us, nor any heat; where the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and lead us to living

fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.”*

O! how near is our happy home—it is just within sight. How near, how very near is eternity: it is even at the door!

Christian reader, you shall soon, very soon reach your happy home. Already your earthly course may be nearly terminated. One step more, and you will have gained the happy shores of Immanuel’s fair land. Having crossed the tempestuous ocean of life, you will enjoy the refreshing breezes of heaven, and the calm repose of the saints’ everlasting home. Your redemption is drawing near. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” A few more suns shall rise and set, and then the unsetting sun shall rise in the “new heavens.” A few more days, and then will dawn the eternal day. A few more fleeting years will pass swiftly by, and then the everlasting

* H. Bonar, author of “The Night of Weeping,” and “The Morning of Joy;” two charming little volumes, written in a pleasing style.

cycles of eternity will roll on. You will soon exchange a cross of suffering on earth, for a crown of glory in heaven, immortal, incorruptible, and that fadeth not away. You will soon join with the whole family of God, in the contemplation of Christ's redeeming love. One theme, that of redemption, shall then employ every soul, and every tongue shall be tuned to the praises of Immanuel. With your redeemed companions in glory, you will soon unite in that sweet, sweet song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own (yea, his own most precious) blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The time is short. "The Lord is at hand." "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."*

* Rev. xxii, 20.

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